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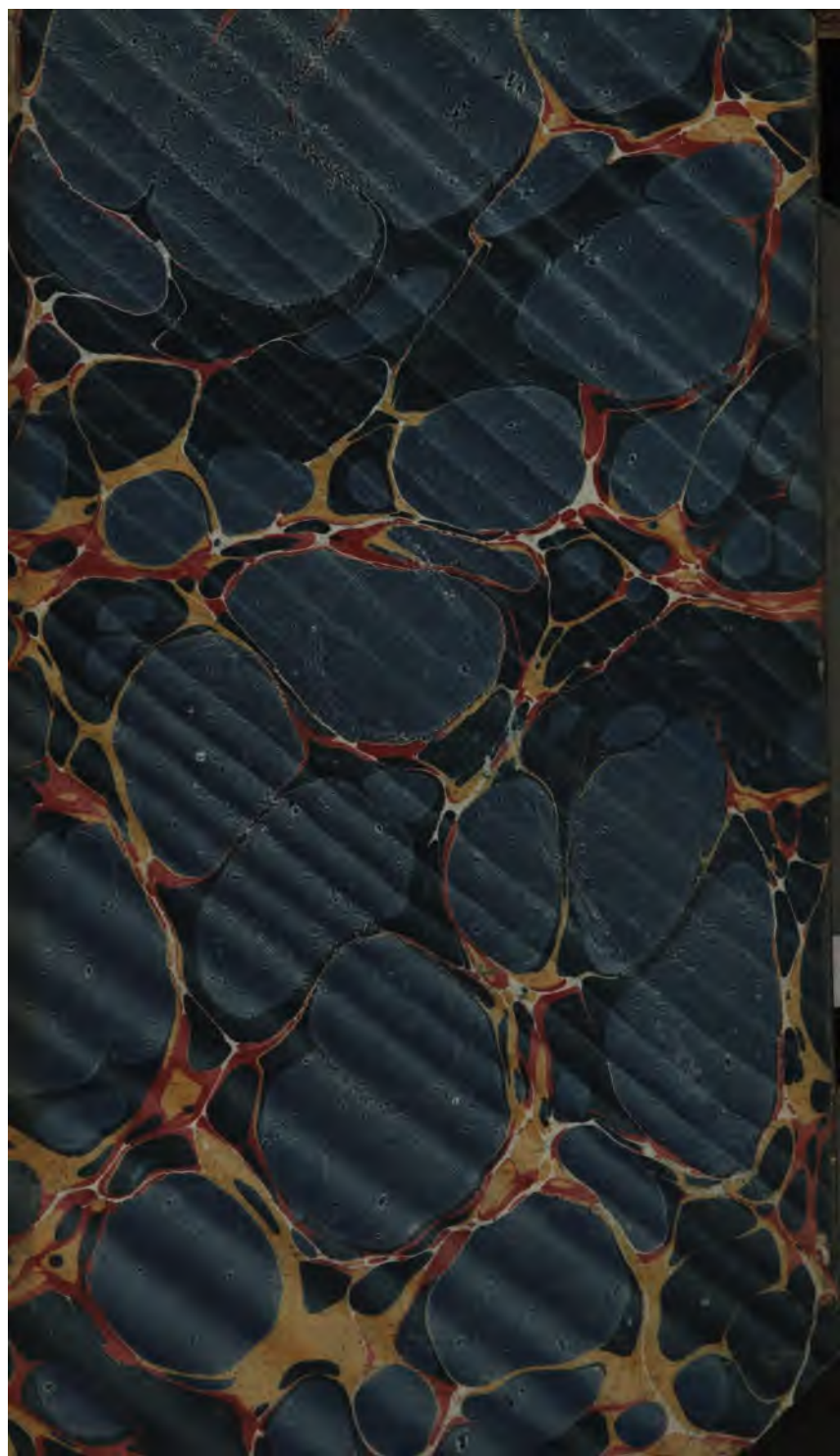
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MARY.



MARY,
A
DAUGHTER OF THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"HIGHLAND SPORTS AND PASTIMES," "EXMOOR," "BROOKLANDS,"
ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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M A R Y,
A DAUGHTER OF
THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.
CHAPTER I.

No sooner the winter of Russia over than the spring bursts forth luxuriantly in a day, as if the flowers had never ceased to bloom or the

birds to sing ; the snow has scarce disappeared ere the most enchanting and balmy atmosphere succeeds to the cutting blasts of winter, and all is blossom, and vegetation. It is then, even in the cold regions of the north, that the nightingale pours forth its thrilling and melodious notes and charms the dwellers there, ere the little songster takes wing for warmer climes, when Providence seems thus to have willed it, so that, resting by the way, it should pour forth its joyous notes of thrilling gladness to many a favored region, till at last the woodlands of merry and glorious England, echo again and again to its notes of melody.

Like human beings whom God has gifted with the charming powers of song as a means of gratification to the million and fortune to themselves. As the nightingale, they often commence their carol in the Russian capital, thence taking flight—visit other

European countries, till at length they fairly settle in our sea girt home, to gain golden opinions and still more solid golden favours, so is it with the little bird we islanders so fondly welcome, when the green leaf bursts forth in fulness, and the day makes lengthened inroads into night. It is, moreover, a strange freak of nature, and a curious one, that the little songster is by no means general in the accordance of its presence or of its delicious melody. Some of the most beautiful counties in this most beautiful land, are never favoured with its song. In the charming land of Devon the nightingale sings not, and in the richest portion of Somerset its note is never heard, and what is still more curious, and to some may appear almost incredulous, while the little creature passes weeks in nightly song to the north east of the luxurious vale of Taunton, to the south and south west its song is never heard.

The season was late in May, the night one of the brightest and most balmy of spring time—it needs no exaggeration, no enthusiasm to describe the delights of such a night in England—those who live in the country, and have experienced its soothing and peaceful sensations, can well picture in their minds and feelings such recollection with all its charms, when seated by the winter's fire-side, the shrill blasts from the north west sounding without, and making the blazing fire and heavy close-drawn curtains more delightful within. The contrast only becomes more pleasing to imagination.

The spring had been unusually early and balmy, and the May trees of large growth scattered over the park of Lindford Hall on which the bright moon cast its glittering rays as on snow hills were in full bloom and rich perfume.

It was on such a night as this, that, after retiring to her room, the youthful Mary Coddington sat at her open window, her small and elegant head, elegant as nature ever moulded, rested on a hand in all respects its fellow ; and yet, though I speak in truth, in recent years at least, no aristocratic blood ran in the veins of those from whom she had derived her existence. During the absence of Frederick, she had once more been called to take her happy place at the Hall. Her friend Augusta, whom now, at least, I ought to call Miss Passmore, had sorrowed in her absence, no less than her friendly instructress Miss Handley, who though her school duties, were now over, was nevertheless retained by the side of those whom she loved as her children. Moreover, Mr. Passmore was waning in years, and he often felt the want, in addition to the presence of his own loved daughter, of her, whom

his bounty had first placed in the situation she now held, and whose increasing affection for the fair girl, which she so justly merited, had caused him to wish her to return there.

During the week previous to the period I now name, he had been daily becoming more and more feeble ; and while, on the one hand, he expressed a desire that Frederick would return home, on the other, he was frequently wont to say—

“ Augusta darling, why not send for our gentle Mary? time that she should return to us—Mr. ——, my steward, is as old and unfit for business as I am ; and he speaks so well of Coddington, that I have determined on promoting him to his place—it is one of respectability and independence, of which any honest man may be proud, much more so he, whose steady conduct and unerring principle has gained it for him. Let people talk as they may, Mary

must return—I shall provide for her—and not all the jealousy of the Winter girls in the whole county shall prevent my loving her as a daughter, who has so well and so gratefully proved the truism. That nature's breeding, if well fostered, and guided by a warm heart and firm, well-regulated mind is the most beautiful gift that woman can possess—let her come back, I say, to those that love her, and add to the happiness of our circle. What say you, Miss Handley, shall it be so ?”

“Nothing would give me more pleasure than seeing my young friend, I may truly add our young friend, at Lindford Hall, sir ; but there is one thing, however, that you will permit me to call to your mind ; she is no longer a child, or the playmate of my beloved pupil ; but a young woman, lovely in person as in mind. You will recollect, moreover, that, ere long, your son, the heir to this noble

estate, will return from his travels, and he speaks of bringing visitors to the Hall. You will not, I conclude, desire that our Mary should be excluded from society, and, under such circumstances, there may be many who will both admire, nay love, this gentle creature, and although loveable as she truly is, nay fit mate for the first in the land, in all matters save birth, her position may be to her, dear girl, as to those who might desire to seek her affections, a source of subsequent misery ; 'tis as well then, sir, that all should be made acquainted with the exact position she holds in your circle, as your own conduct to her will soon prove that she holds in your affection. Your son, and who that knows her would not, was wont to love her from childhood, what may not be his feelings towards her, when he meets her as she now is. And then, although she may have the good sense and firmness—

even were she to return all the sentiments to the fullest extent which may arise in his heart—to suppress from gratitude and affection towards you, the increase of such feelings, be assured the struggle would be severe and overwhelming to one with a mind so sensitive; and thus the happiness of two beings, both so dear to you, might be for ever destroyed. That I have presumed to name these facts you, are well aware, dear sir, can only arise from the love and gratitude I bear towards you all. But having thus stated my opinions, I shall gladly know that yours can offer no reasonable ground for her absence.”

“And I have none. Let my son love her if he will, and wed her too; they shall have my blessing; he might seek through all the drawing rooms in England, and not find one who will grace his position better, or make his home more happy. What if she were lowly born,

she is highly bred—what if she have not the wealth that this world ever seeks in marriage—he has enough, and far more than enough, to make her and all around him rich ; and of mind, seek through the peerage, you will find few that are her equal, so write at once, and let her come. And the sooner we are joined by Fred, and as many gay companions as he will bring to enliven the old Hall, the better ; for the girls will want admirers ; and as you have already selected one for Mary, 'tis well the lilly of Lindford Vale should have one, also ; and as my time draws nearer and nearer, it will be a source of comfort in my old age, to see the young around me with merry faces, and light hearts ; so write, kind friend, the more that come the merrier.”

And Miss Handley did write ; and gladly did Mary Coddington journey to that which now was her only home, and joyously was she pressed to the heart of those awaiting her ar-

rival—no father could have welcomed a precious daughter more fondly than was she received by Mr Passmore—no mother more joyously clasp to her heart a long absent daughter—no sister cling with more delight to the neck of a beloved sister than did Augusta Passmore to that of Mary Coddington—and well she deserved all these proofs of love. Even the noble hound, on whose shaggy back her little feet had often rested, whilst nestling on the rug before a blazing fire, during the winter evenings, and who in summer gladness had bounded after her pony, how he rushed forth to welcome and caress the little hand which had so often fed and caressed him—aye, and even when sickness had oppressed the faithful beast, or accident gave physical pain, who tended him with more care, whose hands washed away the stiffened blood, and poured the healing balm on the wound—why her whom he now so gladly welcomed.

Man, even in your best hours, when your heart expands with noble feelings, when your hand is stretched forth to give the welcome grasp of friendship, or your heart open to return the fond greeting of the returned one you have loved and love, even then may you take a lesson from the noble dog, for his welcome is unalloyed with one feeling of self—his love as true—his affection as unceasing and simple, yet so strong and devoted. That the world, nor man, nor ought save death make it false or fickle.

So Mary came, and her bright and happy smile once more cheered the inmates of the Hall, and her merry laugh, cheerful as the skylark's thrilling note above the golden corn-field, was heard in gladness of spirit, the outpourings of an affectionate heart; and time passed quickly on, as time will pass, whether the heart be light with joy, or sad with the weight of woe.

And the young girl, as I have said, sat at the open window of her chamber, enjoying the balmy night air, filled with the fragrance of the blooming hawthorn made far more delicious to the mind as to the senses, for the nightingale had arrived from the North, and was breaking on the stillness of the night with its soothing notes of harmony. None to whom Providence has granted the great blessing of knowing himself an Englishman but can enjoy the scene we have thus briefly described, even be his home a simple cottage in a rural village of our midland counties, and few knew more thoroughly how to enjoy it than did this simple though high-minded girl; yet, though her senses might be enthralled by the calmness of the midnight hour, the brightness of the moon, and the notes of heaven's songster, her thoughts far away.

It was the eve of his return, who had first spoken to her in words of kindness, first made

her aware of the many qualities, which, with care and kindness, had been brought to maturity—he who, from her earliest years, had treated as a fond brother would treat a younger sister whom he loved—and yet he was no brother—and when was heart so controlled as to arrange its feelings—from her very childhood—from the day she had first danced with him under the spreading walnut tree, and sat by his side in Farmer Winter's barn—from boyhood to manhood, no word of unkindness, no act but of gentleness and affection, had he ever evinced towards her.

As a boy, she had loved him as a playmate, and as a younger brother—in after years, she had esteemed him with deep affection and gratitude—they were still young—too young perhaps to speak of love—such as theirs must needs be if indeed they loved at all—and now they had been long separated—but to-morrow he would come. And she sat at that window and

looked forth on the broad park and glorious woodlands, through which hand-in-hand, in early youth, they had wandered in search of wild flowers; and she knew that he would be lord of them all; and what was she?—the penniless orphan of a labourer—the permitted yet loved associate of those on whose land her parent had laboured for his daily bread.

Strange indeed was her position, perhaps unusual, yet by no means singular, for there have been and are many such, and will be ever. But thought on that night came rapidly and tremulously on her young heart. Few the years she had lived, for her age was then scarce eighteen, and she had difficulty in arranging past events, though she did revert to the humble home where she had first seen the light of day, to the fond parents now no more, who had tenderly nurtured her, to the village school, her playmates there, many of whom she occasionally met, and yet strange though

bright for human nature, no jealousy appeared to exist at her good fortune, to them it appeared as a matter of course—Nature destined her, and placed her in a proper sphere—which birth would have denied her—and mind, with its best of attributes, heart and temper did the rest.

Then she would recur to her father's friend, Radstock, who, she remembered in her childhood, had been so suddenly called from among them, till thought rested on his son, one of her early school-fellows, his son George, and where was he—far quicker than we have taken to write them, did all these contending thoughts, and a thousand more, run rapidly through her mind, but they ever reverted to Frederick ; the gown which she had received as a birth-day present from the Hall, which, at the time, had appeared beyond all price ; his kindness when, returning from the village school, he had relieved her from, her school-book and slate, and

with the pride of a boy, had been her escort home on the winter evenings named.

The pony he had given her, on which he was wont to lift her, and teach her to ride; and the bright eyed terrier which now lay at her feet nestled in sleep, and the noble well trained horse he had afterwards selected, at a high price, for her daily pleasures, and all the numberless acts of courtesy and affection bestowed on one who had come to abide beneath the roof of a long line of ancestors from the thatched cottage of a rural labourer.

And all these fond endearments offered and accepted without one apparent thought of what the world would denominate improper attention or love making. In fact they were solely what at the time they appeared to be, the kind and gentle attention of a noble hearted and well bred youth towards one, who came as an associate of his sister, and the selected *protégé* of his aged father; one who from whatever posi-

tion she might have sprung, soon made herself loved for her disposition and esteemed for her mental acquirements.

But Frederick Passmore, young as he was, was incapable of treating any woman unkindly, be she who or what she might, and he knew his own position far too well to imagine that it would be in the slightest degree tarnished by coming in contact with any one below him. While, as regards Mary, he soon ascertained that it was an honour to obtain her regard—an honour of which he was only too sensible. Place any girl in her position, any man in his, they must hate or love to madness. Yet, at that moment, Mary Coddington, only loved the man she expected to welcome on the morrow, as she loved his father or his sister, or Miss Handley, though she might have flown for advice or assistance to him rather than to others. And Frederick Passmore did not then really love the girl he expected to meet on

the morrow, more than he did his sister, or his aged father; but he thought of her, perhaps, more than of others, though it would be difficult to have said which at the time he held most firmly in his affections, he loved them all so well.

And yet the fact is strange, though true. Frederick Passmore, though in a different locale, was doing precisely that which Mary Coddington was doing. The one who had so far returned from his rambles had halted for the night, at Clifton; a spot pleasing to him from the agreeable period he had passed there a short time previously, with his friend Miravale, and delightful from the glorious scenes of nature which are unsurpassed, in this our beauteous land, as elsewhere—once seen never to be forgotten. At the window of an hotel so placed, as to command a prospect of rock, wood, and down; a truly well selected halting place to those whose wandering footsteps lead them in

search of nature's loveliness — sat Frederick Passmore, looking on the scene I have mentioned on the night Mary Coddington sat gazing on the woodlands which claimed him as their future master.

If the young girl's thoughts were with him, his were no less with her. On the morrow he would once more be permitted to look on that fair young face, which, with unabated interest he had watched from boyhood to manhood. The happiness of meeting his aged and honoured father, though brief their separation, the delight of pressing to his heart an only and much beloved sister had its weight in a mind like his. Yet the bright and intellectual face of her who had been his playmate and his care, stood prominent in his thoughts—who can condemn him, who so placed would have felt otherwise.

And the nightingales sang melodiously, in this hour of night and silence, to his listening ear, as did they to hers, who, thinking of him, was

nearest to his thoughts. To what next tended the several sentiments of this individual whom God had blessed with far more than common genius—far more virtues of generosity—name affection, and nobleness of heart—these may be so termed—and far more, personal attractions than usually fall to the lot of man.

Were I to utter the words which would the best explain their thoughts, the girl would thus speak. “ I, the penniless orphan of one who has laboured for his daily bread on these broad lands ; I the humble cottage girl, who in years not long since, was made happy by a garland of wild flowers plucked in the neighbouring hedge rows ; I the loved child of those whose daily board was overspread with the most simple fare, whose early days of childhood were passed, and passed most happily, under a roof whose mere rental scarce exceeded the price paid for the dress which now I wear ; happy in the fond caresses of simple minded, yet un-

educated, but honest parents. I, who on returning from the rustic parish school looked forward with joy, unalloyed, to be repaid for any trifling schoolastic success by the rough pressure of a noble hearted, but rough farm labourer.

“What am I now, the cherished and loved companion of her with whom the proudest of the land might seek with pride to ally to themselves. In heart the loved child of her, whose birth and fortune less high in worldly matters, yet equal in all noble qualities of mind; and assuredly the selected daughter of one, whose wealth and position had in her earliest years appeared to her as only second to my sovereign.”

Was she dreaming, or was it really true that the position she now held—one which she felt was truly her own—had only been attained through the magic power of fairyism—or was it really to be hers now and for ever.

A single thought convinced her she could

never retrograde ; nature's never erring heart might still cling to feelings of parental affection ; yet high mental acquirements—natural refined tastes, surpassing accomplishments, could only cause feelings of the deepest disgust to arise in her mind, should circumstances ever remove her from the pedestal on which she had placed herself, and from which she feared not to fall.

No, no—no sweet girl—no arrogance—no assumption—no chance has placed you there—but nature's law, which needs no other—but a firm and well directed mind. Yet if she thought much of her own position, how far more did imagination lead her to connect it with him, whose thoughts, as is doubtless the case, ordered for some wise purpose, at the same midnight hour were fully centered on her.

“ To-morrow—a few brief hours, hence he will come, he who has ever evinced towards

me, the proudest, the firmest, the most devoted, brotherly, affection, much as I felt the parting—still more I feel the hope of meeting. Why these unusual emotions, surely I shall be to him as I was wont to be, his second sister, his cherished friend. Yet when we parted he had scarcely arrived at the years of manhood, scarcely had time to think of the wide gulph which separates the village girl from the lord of countless acres, and ancient ancestry. Besides, he had then scarcely mixed with the world, surely he must have seen many a fair girl, many a gentle noble woman, his equal in birth and wealth, and education. Oh how far beyond her to whom he has ever been a brother.”

Were such feelings as these the dawning of love in the heart of one who had hitherto, perhaps, never allowed her mind to rest on such thoughts, or were they called up by the thoughts of the morrow’s meeting. If so, I must suppress them—for never will those who

have so nobly dealt with me, meet my ingratitude in return. And to love the son of him who has been more than a father to me—even should that son reciprocate such sentiments towards me, would be base indeed. Why beats my heart so quick to night—why these feelings, which in spite of my better judgment overwhelm me. First, let me kneel to God for strength to bear with humility and thankfulness the many blessings which in his goodness he has showered on one so unworthy, and then resign myself to peaceful sleep in the hope that to-morrow's sun will rise in all its brightness to greet him who will be fondly welcomed here."

And with a heart filled with unusual and contending emotions, and not less so with gratitude and affection, the gentle girl knelt in humble prayer to Him who read her inmost thoughts—then closing the casement, sought her pillow in rest.

And Frederick also looked forth on the

bright refulgent heavens glittering with innumerable stars, and on the glorious moon—and listened also with softened feelings to the nightingale's note. And his thoughts wandered to the happy home of his childhood, and to those so dear to him, who would joy to see him on the morrow.

His mind reverted first though briefly to his aged and much loved father, and not one thought occurred to mar the even current of his memory; from him, nought save the most parental affection, nought save the most generous fondness had he ever experienced—and his sister—his own, his only sister, how truly his heart yearned towards her—how warmly would he fold her to his heart—though so brief the period of their separation.

And lastly, though his heart scarcely then had told him of the fact yet far more strongly did his thoughts rest on that fair girl whom in boyhood he had been wont to call his little pet wife—

the being whom he had felt it a sort of boyish, chivalrous duty to protect from all others. The gentle high-minded girl with whom in after years he had loved to wander over hill and dale, though mead and woodland, delighting in her high spirits and joyous mirth, and admiring the fearless grace with which she rode the noble animal he had selected for her gratification. This picture probably was the most strongly engrafted on his memory, for well he loved to mount a gallant steed himself, and therefore could he appreciate the taste in others, moreover there are few occasions when a lovely woman becomes more lovely to the eye of man than when dressed in that costume which even gives grace to the plainest.

Then would his thoughts revert to those moments when her gentle hand would fondly place the pillow for his suffering father, or tend him as lovely woman will in sickness or sorrow, as if every pain the sufferer felt was

theirs, and every want their duty to supply, innumerable were the recollections such as these which crowded on his heart, feelings which go far to nurture love even in a heart that has never experienced its sweetness. Then came second thought and reason.

“I must cast off all tender thoughts ; should any thing occur to my father, great will be the claim of my God and my country. The property which will then become mine, I shall hold it for the benefit of mankind as well as myself. Ambition leads me to hope for a place among those who labour in the senate. For duty dictates me to no life of idleness. It will then be my pleasure to watch over those beings now so dear to me. But that gentle girl, could she still remain beneath my care. No, the world, the cruel unjust world will allow no constant association under the same roof, however virtuous, however affectionate, between two beings of the opposite sex unallied.

Yet she must not part from us—no, the being so lovely, the loved and respected *protégé* of my father the beloved friend of my sister—the adopted child of Miss Handley, high or low, rich or poor, shall ever find a shelter beneath my roof. ‘Why not as my own fond wife, said dawning love.’ ‘The daughter of a rural labourer, replied worldly reason.’ Have I not rank enough—fortune—position—and this fair girl, virtue, mind and disposition beyond all price. Yes, indeed has she, and what more is required to make my home one of future joy and peace, my life one of unequalled happiness.”

The voice of love says take her to your heart as a pearl beyond price. The pride of the world says she is a labourer’s daughter. The sequel will show whether the voice of love or the world’s pride spoke with the most reason. Frederick Passmore, with one more look at those dark and lovely woods which over-

shadowed the river Avon, with one more song from the thrilling notes of the nightingale, did, as some higher power had so willed it, precisely what that lovely being had done whose thoughts during the midnight hour had been with him as were his with her.

Mr. Eden had already retired, and as the chains of thought, if that thought be filled with happiness, must ever be broken by the realities of life, so were those of Frederick Passmore, who, ringing for his chamber candle, retired to prepare, by refreshing sleep, for the events of to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

“ Hopes, what are they ? Beads of morning,
Strung on slender blades of grass ;
Or a spider's web adorning,
In a strait and treacherous pass.”

THE morrow came not as the setting of the last evening's sun had given promise, but heavy and overcast—such is the hope of man—to-day all sunshine and joy—to-morrow a bitter

blank. Thunder clouds rolled over the heavens, and from the heated and oppressive atmosphere, large splashing heat drops fell at intervals on the trees whose leaves were unruffled with the slightest wind ; in fact it was one of those dense and suffocating days, with which the will of Providence, at times, greets us in summer time, generally the follower of three days glorious sunshine, and the prelude to a thunder storm.

Towards evening time the thunder boomed at intervals, and flashes of heat or rather sheet lightning illumed the sky. No railways then, with the speed of eclipse, conveyed the anxious traveller on his way—whatever the heart's anxious beatings to reach the goal of his dearest hopes ; money and four posters made the chariot wheels revolve, still was the speed as the rolling of a waggon compared to the swift flying express, which now dashing from town to town, from county to county,

delightful from the conviction which tells us a few hours will bring us near to those we love in sickness or in sorrow, health or joy. Thankful as we ought to be that God has so gifted man for man's benefit, I for one must confess there were few more delightful sensations than that of travelling through a rich country varied by abundant interests, now through town, village, vale, and over downland, seated at one's ease, in a well-built chariot, following in the wake of four well conditioned posters, and so sat Frederick Passmore, and although the heavens were dense enough, to effect the spirits to sadness, his felt light with the hope and anticipation of joining those he loved so fondly ; and each mile as nearer and nearer he approached the boundary of the Lindford Hall property, quicker and quicker beat every pulsation of that heart, till at length, as the lodge gates flew open, and each well-known tree spread forth its aged members as if to welcome him to

his home, he felt the rapid pace at which he travelled was far too slow, and more than once was inclined to jump from the carriage and try his speed against the posters.


At length the foaming animals stand panting before the portal of his home, one instant to rush up the steps and he is enfolded in the arms of a fond sister, another and his hand is warmly clasped in that of Miss Handley, he turns once more to welcome with affection her with whom his almost every thought had been throughout his journey, when in an instant he became aware that amid all his thoughts he had forgotten one thing, that the laughing girl who had left them almost as a child who was wont to chase across the lawn with her long ringlets floating in the breeze, uncontrolled by cap or bonnet, was now become a woman, and although with deep interest and affection he took both her hands in his, and with the most truthful sincerity of manner, ex-

pressed his heartfelt gladness at once more meeting her as one among the circle of his home, he hesitated to fold to his heart her whom in earlier days had shared such attentions with his sister. Yet as he gazed intently and with fondness on that fair and graceful girl, whose eyes were fast filling with tears of joy at their meeting, like the sheet lightning which still illumined the sky without, so passed thought rapidly through his brain, convincing him that he had not erred in the belief that the well nurtured mind of a humble cottage girl, aided by the attractions of person, granted by a bountiful Providence, could form the most graceful and best bred of women.

“Well, dearest Mary, I am no flatterer,” said Frederick Passmore, “had I met you elsewhere than beneath my father’s roof—now your natural home—I should have hesitated ere I presumed to claim you as my former playmate, for I see her who was the gayest of the gay is

now, in truth, the fairest of the fair ; indeed I shall become jealous of my former place in your esteem, for I fear me there will be more lances than mine ready to break in your behalf ; and our Augusta here, truly she may be called the lilly of the valley, but really if I desire to keep the one in this our loved village, I must invite some champion for my sister's sake, to wear her scarf. But my dear father, why is he not here to welcome the prodigal son ? Has my long absence displeased him, or does he disapprove my taste that I have doomed Eden to so many hundreds of miles of easy travelling through the land we live in, instead of being buried alive in an avalanche on Mount Blanc, or broiled with the heat of Eastern suns."

"No, oh no, dearest Fred, our father is all anxiety to embrace him whose place, much as we have tried, neither my darling Mary or this my second mother or myself ever fill in his



heart ; I grieve to say he has not been so well of late, and the oppressive heat of to-day, together with the nervous anxiety consequent on the expectation of your arrival has much tried him, so as his head is worse, I have insisted on his awaiting your joining him in the library, there let us hasten, when you have done admiring Mary, whose pale face is covered with the first blush rose tint I ever witnessed there."

They went to meet their father, how beautiful is parental love. The old man rose from his chair and warmly embraced the son of his affection, again and again expressing his happy feelings, that he was once more returned to be his companion and nurse. But the heart of Frederick, before so light, became sorrowful ; it was in vain that he endeavoured to conceal from his mind the ravages which a few short months of sickness had made in the appearance of that venerable and much loved parent. Age

and suffering were too deeply marked on every line of his countenance to admit of hope that his precious life would long be spared to them ; though he endeavoured, by every possible term of love and gaiety, to conceal the emotions which he felt.

All was too clear to him—his father's days were numbered, and a new era was about to commence in his hitherto unruffled life.

Nevertheless, the party who assembled round the tea-table that evening, had any stranger entered, would have been considered one of the happiest that the mind or the imagination can well depict. All hearts seemed knit together as in one ; and although the heavy clouds of the morning had given way to a deluge of rain, and the thunder, now more distant and distant, echoed through the hills, and the atmosphere became gradually more and more light, with here and there a break in the sky, which gave hope of a speedy termina-

tion to the storm ; none who sat around that cheerful board thought of the splashing rain, or the distant thunder, or the hope of glittering stars, so full were their hearts joy in each other's presence, so happily they listened to the varied scenes of travel so graphically described, now in bright and joyous tones of merriment by Frederick ; now, in words of interest, by Mr. Eden, and when the long, summer evening deepened into night, and the passing storm gave place to a heaven glittering with brilliant stars, not one among that circle but felt thankfulness to God for the many blessings bestowed on them.

The father, for the love of his son, the sister for the brother ; the friend, to whom each hour her heart more warmly clung ; and when at length they parted for the peaceful rest of night, it would have been difficult to have found in the length and breadth of merry England a family more united, or who more fully

deserved the many blessings which were theirs.

Yet while God thinks fit so to grant his benefits, whether they be of this world—here on earth to the one, while care and poverty is the allotted portion of another; 'tis equally our duty while we bless Him for the one to endeavour to submit in patient endurance even gratitude to other; for who can tell when his time may come, whether of sorrow or joy; the dullest morn may break into sunshine ere noon, the brightest morn may be clouded ere the sun goes down.

Such was the case with this happy circle. How little do any of us know what an hour may bring forth. The storm had ceased without—the stars shone brilliantly in the heavens—not a leaf moved in the woodland, all nature was calm, as calm and silent as the rest of those who slept within the Hall. And yet there were two beings whose eyes remained unclosed

—Frederick Passmore and Mary Coddington, thought with them had usurped the power of rest.

In the short evening they had passed together, nature had told them they were no longer playmates, nor attached friends, nor sister and brother, yet each, though scarcely known to themselves, felt sentiments arising in their hearts scarcely definable, yet having once taken root, not easily eradicated. And thus calm sleep at length closed their eyelids. The early dawn of morning, however, had scarcely thrown its rays of light across the park, ere a hasty knock at Frederick Passmore's door aroused him from a deep slumber. Starting from his bed, half dreaming—half sleeping—he rushed to the door, sufficiently conscious to fear that something unusual had happened to cause this sudden disturbance; and quickly opening it he beheld the affrighted face of his father's favorite servant, a servant who, honoured and

respected, had long been an inmate of his home.

“What is the matter, Marsden, for heaven’s sake tell me what is the matter, has anything occurred at this unusual hour to cause you thus to seek me? Is my dear father ill, or Miss Mary, or my sister? tell me at once what has happened, or what I can do.”

“I fear me, sir, your good father is very, very ill. I was aroused by a violent ringing of his bell, which you are aware is at the head of his bed, and communicates with the room in which I sleep, next to his own. I immediately obeyed the summons, when I found him apparently in a slight fit, the third with which he has been attacked during your absence; without hesitation I administered the restoratives to which he has been accustomed; I left him calm, and immediately repaired here, sir, after having sent for Mr. Western, his medical attendant”

“ You did well, my good Marsden ; return at once to his room, where I will join you in an instant. But let no one be disturbed.”

Having hastily put on his dressing-gown and slippers, Frederick hastened to his father's room, too late, alas ! even to receive his blessing ; true he was still warm with the recent circulation of life, but the spirit had flown—Mr. Passmore lay gently as a child in slumber, the bed clothes were even unruffled by a struggle—the aged owner of vast and abundant possessions was dead—his soul had departed. The lips which only a few brief hours previously had opened in joy and gladness to welcome his beloved son, were now closed in death, the hand which, ere the midnight hour had sounded, he had held in affectionate wishes for his nightly rest was cold and inanimate.

A few short hours had turned gladness into sorrow. And he who with happiness at heart and gay words on his lips had returned to the

home of his boyhood, now stood by the death-bed of him he had loved and honoured, the sole remaining representative of a long line of agricultural ancestors, himself the owner of Lindford—its noble hills and glorious woodlands, its rich vales, and sparkling river.

Such are the scenes which are daily occurring around us, scarce a week elapses that we do not hear of the head of some family—an only son—an idolised daughter—or a fond and doting mother—at the very moment when all the world believe their cup to be filled to the brim with joy—being suddenly cut off in the midst of gladness; and yet we all pursue our course, be it duty or folly, as if we were to live for ever. Man in his presumption, pride or fear, neglects even the most solemn duties to his family, he feels himself so secure from death, though his neighbour, perhaps younger or less ailing, dies before him; while others, if they think at all, neglectful of all duty to God, neglect also their duty to man.

Such was the case with him thus suddenly removed from all that could make life most valuable ; the most perfect love and affection from his children, abundant riches, years without physical suffering, or pain, or illness of any kind ; and in the midst of these rare comforts, Mr. Passmore, without the most remote intention of doing an injustice, died without a will, and her whom he had cherished and elevated—with the fondest feelings affection the darling being whom he had loved as a daughter—was left as penniless as when, from the thatched cottage of her father, she had first entered the portals of Lindford Hall ; so was it, comparatively, with her who had been a mother to his children.

I shall pass over the shock caused to every inmate of that house, who had laid them down in peace and happiness to take their rest, when on awaking they were informed of this sad and sudden event. I shall pass over the sorrow

of a funeral, I shall pass over the mourning of the fatherless—the household who had lost a good master.

Frederick Passmore had now duties to perform of no common order ; let us follow his career. Had he been, as thousands unhappily are, a gambler, or an improvident son, it is possible his first care might have been that of securing the ready money left by his father to liquidate post obits, or by clearing away some of the splendid trees on the property, raising the rents, which were then low, or by other means have endeavoured to secure the means of freeing himself from embarrassment.

Or had he not loved and respected his sister's faithful governess and his father's *protégé* ; what might have been their fate ; the one might have gone forth almost a beggar to seek her bread, in advanced years, after so much cause for gratitude. The other, God help her, with mind, heart, beauties of person, once a cottage

girl, now a well-bred, much-loved woman, what would be her fate, were she cast forth to battle with the world for bread?

Happily—most happily he who was now the lord of Lindford's rich acres, was also one whose mind was directed by a heart overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and in all things just as generous. Therefore, no sooner was his father laid in the grave side by side with his ancestors, than he set resolutely to work for the benefit of those whom he considered as left under his especial charge, without allowing the deep sorrow which he naturally felt for the departed in any manner to interfere with what he considered a sacred duty.

Not a word was uttered in reference to a will not being forthcoming, but means were at once taken to secure both to Mary Coddington and to Miss Handley perfect independency. And ~~this~~ was so conveyed to them, that they un-

hesitatingly accepted it, as proceeding in their belief from the generous kindness of him whose soul had departed, their hearts responded with gratitude and affection in memory of one who ought to have acted, and doubtless would have acted, had not Mr. Passmore done that which most are too wont to do, put off for the morrow that which should be done to-day, and which, consequently, is often never done at all.

Miss Passmore was now become an heiress, as the early portion of these pages have named, and on her account Frederick had, therefore, little disquietude; moreover, being of age himself, and having succeeded to that most unusual prize, a large and totally unencumbered property, together with a considerable amount of ready money, he had little further trouble than that of taking possession.

How did he do so, not by increasing his establishment, turning off the old servants who

had grown grey in the service of his family, and supplying their places with French valets, filling his stables with steeple chasers, or his house with time-serving idlers, or displacing the comforts of old England to make place for foreign gim-cracks and unnecessary baubles—no, he sent for his steward, the newly installed brother of her he so greatly esteemed, and in whom he had perfect confidence, and with him entered fully into those duties which the possession of such property entailed on him.

On Coddington entering the library, a few weeks after the funeral of his father, to place some matters of business before his patron, he found him intently perusing the county paper.

“Good morning, Mr. Coddington, good morning,” said Frederick, laying aside the paper, “I was on the point of sending to you

—look here, is it possible that we live in the land of freedom, and such things as these are allowed—no wonder that chartism is making sad advances—look here.”

He pointed to a letter—will it be credited—a letter, purporting to be dictated by a minister of the Church written by his son, and addressed to a tenant, setting forth, that as he had voted, at a recent election, contrary to the opinions entertained by his landlord, he requested his immediate relinquishment of his tenancy, inasmuch as he intended to have no tenant under him who voted contrary to his views.

“Now what do you think of this, Coddington, coming moreover from a minister of the gospel. This letter will go forth throughout the length and breadth of merry England, and deep will be the disgust that it will naturally create in the minds of all good men. Now, my first wish, good friend, is, that you should

call together my tenants on the first practical occasion, consistent with convenience, in order that I may personally explain my sense of such conduct as this, and moreover, assure them, that while I expect that they will do justice to my land as to me by a regular payment of their rents, they have my most firm assurance that in no possible manner will I endeavour to interfere with their freedom of opinion in reference to political subjects. As I hold the freedom of opinion in this country to be one of its greatest blessings, and as I intend to use it myself, so will I grant it to all with whom, by property, I may come in contact. You agree with me in these sentiments, I am sure, and will go hand-and-hand with me in seeing them carried out ; had we not, at least, a few noble-minded patriots among the aristocracy to head us in putting down such an abominable system of bigotry and insufferable coercion, un-Eng-

lish, as is the feeling, which would induce us to admit, in a measure, the necessity of the ballot—such conduct as this, particularly as coming from a clergyman, is sufficient to cause all hesitation on the subject to be thrown into the balance in its favour.”

“I thoroughly agree with you, sir. And there is another subject I am desirous of naming—you are aware, probably, that a report is current, that one of Farmer Winter’s sisters has made a strange marriage—it is said, that she has been most imprudently led away by a low, vile fellow, who some years since came to this neighbourhood for the sole purpose of influencing the minds of our rural and peaceful district. Moreover, there is no question but young George Radstock is connected with this chartist gang. As you speak of visiting London, you will, probably, make some kind enquiries on the subject, as I cannot but recollect, high as the position is now,

in which you and your good father have placed me, that Radstock's father was wont to treat me kindly—and I was ever the playmate of this misguided lad, whom I would desire to see once more with us, if he could be rescued from the set among whom I fear he is now residing."

"Your wishes do you honour, Coddington; and to tell you truly, I have heard much of George Radstock, and I have already taken steps to enquire into more particulars, as to what are his pursuits, and, if possible, to shield him from the inevitable consequences of yielding to the unwholesome advice which he has received at the hands of these red republicans, which, added to a foolish love for a position to which he has no power of mind to entitle him, and I will add an equally foolish love for the younger Winter girl, who is nevertheless some years older than himself, and who though she considers herself far above him in all re-

spects, I fear me, has, in a great measure, influenced his wild proceedings ; however, as I have already said, I shall soon be in London, and you shall hear from me on the subject. In the meantime, suppress these rebellious feelings from taking root in the hearts of our country people—I need scarcely add, that the means of securing their happiness is to give them employment, and do them justice.”

“ You are right, my kind master and patron,” said the manly and good feeling Cod-dington, tears of gratitude rising in his eyes, “ may you long live among us to act on the high and right feelings which you entertain, and which must lead to your own happiness, as to those who are dependent on you.”

“ Well, good friend, you must aid me in the views you approve ; recollect, I have no longer a parent to advise with ; and I trust I feel, that the wealth allotted me, is not given

solely for my own pleasures, so shall it be my endeavour, with God's aid, to make those who belong to my estate esteem and honour me."

And so they parted.

CHAPTER III.

“ Something than beauty dearer, should they look,
Or on the mind, or mind illumined face ;
Truth, goodness, honor, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven.”

THE summer was advancing—the flowery hawthorn had long since ceased to bloom—no longer the nightingale’s note was heard in the vale of Lindford. The moon shone as bright, the stars still glittered in the bright heavens

of midsummer—the sun still rose in all its wonted glory on those beauteous woodlands, yet sorrow still lingered in the hearts of the inmates of that proud Hall for him who had recently formed one of a happy circle, and who though gone was not forgotten.

The easy chair he had so recently occupied, and around which the noble hound daily walked, as if expecting the presence of him, who, a few short weeks since, had sat there and caressed him, while a thousand other trifles, if such were wanting, hourly recalled him to the presence of those he had left. These, however, are the common pangs which follow on the death of those dear to us, and which time alone can soften, though, with many, never entirely heal.

About six weeks after the funeral of Mr. Passmore, on one of those soft evenings of July, when all nature seems at rest, and not a sound is heard in our rich vales, save

the lowing of the cow, or distant tinkle of the sheep bell, dinner being over, Mary Coddington and Frederick Passmore walked forth on that beautiful terrace, which I have vainly endeavoured to describe in the opening of this tale, when, after taking a turn or two, without further conversation than a casual remark on the beauty of the weather, or the luxuriant foliage—Mary exclaimed—

“Dearest Frederick, it is not very many years since that together with dear Augusta, it was our wont to gambol here while he who loved to watch those gambols with joy in his eye and and love at his heart, sat on yonder seat.”

“Do you recollect, dear one,” returned Frederick, “that evening, when our companion, Bran, who now follows you as closely, as if he feared that even his master was no sufficient safeguard, joined in our romps, but somewhat too roughly. You had clambered, like a wild girl as you were,

in mischief, on the top of this parapet, when the noble beast jumped up to caress you, and in so doing, nearly cast you on the lawn below ; had it been so, you would not now be here to replace in my affections him who is gone ; you were then young, very young, and so was I, yet never shall I forget my dear father's agony of fear, when he witnessed your danger, for he loved you well, dear girl, yes, even as he loved your heart's sister Augusta."

"And I returned that love, dear Frederick, and never shall I cease to recollect him with gratitude and veneration ; neither shall I ever forget that night, or him who ran to my rescue, and who has since treated me with more than the kindness of a brother ; so let me, dear friend, avail myself of this opportunity, and now that we are alone, say how much—how truly, and how deeply my whole heart thanks you for your noble kindness and protection to me and to mine. What should I have now

been had I never known the home, and never have found the friends—that, since my earliest childhood, have clung to me in this dear house. How often when away from hence have the scenes of our happy childhood in this house occurred to my memory, and I have thought it some fairy tale of my humble cottage home, compared with this. My brother, only this morning related to me again and again all your noble sentiments. Need I tell you, dear friend, how much I honour them, how fondly I believe my brother will, with the labour of life seek to do justice to your name and to those who look up to you—there—”

“Say no more—say no more on that subject, dearest Mary, but let us sit down here, for I have much to name to you on a subject near my heart. My happiness would be best ensured by remaining in this dear spot, endeared to me by all that can make life valuable

but duty, for a time, at least, calls me hence, so sit beside me, here, and, tell me, truly as your truthful heart dictates, if my intentions are right."

As they sat side-by-side, on that splendid terrace, it would have been difficult, even for the highest force of imagination to paint that which I write in truthfulness, that two more interesting beings rarely met together—nature had indeed befriended them. As there they sat—fit actors on a scene so lovely—neither Frederick Passmore or Mary Coddington however were that which might be generally termed handsome; many might have pronounced them far otherwise; Frederick in particular, had by no means, as he advanced to manhood retained that beauty of person of which his childhood had given promise, yet he possessed that which to the female eye, as to all who watch the human countenance, is far beyond it—the most refined and intellectual expression, and eyes though naturally calm, blue, and

gentle, which, when animated, lighted up with the most brilliant expression, and while his open forehead bespoke mind and intellect, his truthful heart and natural manner conveyed the most agreeable feelings to all who were associated with him.

And the gentle Mary who sat by his side, with eyes, watching him with affection and emotion, resting on his speaking countenance, —in the brilliant ball-room or the fashionable crowd by many she might have been passed unnoticed, but a nearer view would have convinced them that that fair pale girl possessed mental qualities which when called into action, made her small and pallid countenance all but beautiful.

Her figure was extremely slight, though in the most perfect proportion, and though authors have written and poets essay to prove that the beauty of the foot, and the smallness of the hand is a sufficient proof of high birth,

in her the assertion was misplaced, for a more beautiful hand, and equally beautiful foot were never granted to woman, yet, if the little foot which now peeped beneath her light summer dress, or the little hand which rested on the parapet, were beautiful—the small head which remained uncovered—for the warmth of the evening was oppressive—was a model of most perfect symmetry ; her eyes were large, blue, and intelligent ; her face pale, the mouth, however, though depicting firmness of purpose and will, was by no means well formed ; with all these personal advantages, as I said before, by the general observer, as she there sat, on that beautiful terrace, she would not have been pronounced even pretty, but to those who looked beyond the general outline of a countenance, or to one who loved her, she would have been pronounced almost perfect. Let her speak for herself.

“ You are right, dear Frederick, to do your

duty to your country as you have ever done to your friends, and your first is that of seeing to the welfare of those who now look up to you as their landlord and protector ; you know I speak as one born of the people, and though I have been accustomed to live here so long that I scarcely recollect what are the feelings of a cottager, I know, and know full well that he who possesses large estates, has a large reckoning with God, as well as man ; and it is in his power if he only does his duty, to make the position of hundreds blessed, as well as his own home one of peace and happiness ; however, you have already taken the first step towards making yourself beloved as I am assured your every act will prove. But tell me, dear friend, will your stay be long away from us ?”

“ No, dear girl, no, I go to London to make some arrangements in reference to my father’s property, as also bring back my friend Miravale, that is to say if you will promise not to fall in

love with him—for I intend him for our dear Augusta, if I can persuade him, at least, to renounce, in some measure the wild political schemes he has formed, which, to tell you the truth, Mary, I fear may lead him into error; and were you to know him as well as I do, you would acknowledge that he possesses some of the finest qualities that ennoble man.”

“As your friend I should much wish to know him, as I feel certain you would select no unworthy companion; but I doubt if my heart is much given to fall in love,” said Mary, while a blush covered her pale face, as she looked at her companion, “save it be with this dear old doggy, here.”

“Then will that heart be more valuable to him who has the joy to possess it,” replied Frederick, taking her little hand in his and pressing it with affection. “But tell me—what say you—shall I urge on Augusta, and our dear Miss Handley and Eden—to give up

for a season, this rural life, and join us in a trip to the Great Babylon. The season is not yet over, and though our recent sorrow would exclude us from the world and its gaieties, it would by no means prevent your visiting many of those noble works of art, and other sights which would tend to your enjoyment; I am not one of those who think seclusion the best cure for sorrow."

"No, dear friend, it may not be; I am convinced Augusta would not desire to leave home, at this moment of affliction, and I would far rather await your return in this glorious country, than travel to the city. But on some future occasion, I know few things I should so greatly enjoy as that of being your companion, or I would say, in truth, asking you to be my guide, to all these sights you have so frequently described to me."

"Be it so, dearest Mary, then I shall leave you here to watch over my pets—horses, dogs, and

even cats, and also over the poor ; you have my free permission to expend any sum you like, either in the improvement of village schools or ought else. Apply to my friend Coddington, he will do all you desire.”

“A thousand thanks, you shall be well obeyed, your interests shall be mine.”

“And you will write often Mary, and tell me, during the brief time I purpose being absent, all that passes here ; do not think that in constituting you, dearest, the keeper of the privy purse, I do ought of injustice to our dear sister, far from it, she will not love us less, that we allow her to go on in her own gentle way. One more communication and I have done, sweet friend. I am ambitious—Miravale, writes me word there is a chance of the county being vacant—and as my ancestors have represented it in years gone by I see no reason why I should not try my chance, and if so, you shall write my address. But it is now

getting chilly, pet, and I see Miss Mis Handley coming to reprove you for sitting so long without your bonnet, so recollect all I have said to you, for I expect to be obeyed."

Miss Handley did approach those two amiable and gifted beings, and as she looked on them, with the eyes of love—at the same time reproving her loved pupil for forgetting that the summer dew fell heavy—hopes arose in her heart—not without foundation—that the lord of all she surveyed, might judge as she had judged, that the heart and mind of the graceful girl who sat beside him, was as noble as nobility of nature could make it, and a fit mate for the highest of the land.

"Well, dear old woman," said Frederick, kindly, taking Miss Handley's arm in his, "well, dear old girl, you just come in time to prevent my carrying off this darling of yours to the great city of London—she tells me, she longs to see the beauties of art as well as those

of nature ; moreover, she has done me the honour to select me for her chaperon—what say you, shall she go—will you part with her, or will you be of the party.”

“ Mary must decide for herself, but I should say, on this occasion,” replied Miss Handley, laughing, “ that she had better remain with me. As I have not, you will recollect, entirely given up my charge, nor have you dismissed me from your service.”

“ Nor will I with life, dear friend,” said Frederick, kindly, “ as long as you are happy beneath the shelter of my roof, there shall you remain.”

“ Thanks, a thousand thanks, dear friend,” replied Miss Handley, but you will doubtless select some fine London lady ere you return hence, as the mistress of Lindford Hall ; and my pet and I will then entreat you to build us a little tiny cottage beneath the shelter of yonder woodlands, and when the honeysuckle,

jessamine and roses have grown around it, and are in full bloom, we will ask you to pay us a visit, and introduce those, who will feel happiness even in being your tenants, to your fair bride."

"No, oh no," said Frederick, while an appearance of sadness passed across his speaking countenance. "The woman who becomes my wife will love me far too well to wish you to remove from the home she is willing to share and make joyous to me; she will never wish to remove from that home, her who has supplied the place of my mother. And so my second mother, for such you are, and such you will ever be—let no thoughts that another will ever deprive you of my love, or your place beneath my roof, enter your dear old precious head," and as he said this, he turned to the sweet girl, who now walked by his side—and taking her hand, placed it in that of Miss Handley, ~~and then~~ "I have appointed Mary as

my representative, during my absence in London. Ask her if she thinks that Frederick Passmore is the man to part those whose hearts are joined in the truest affection."

CHAPTER IV.

Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence.

It would be difficult to explain the feelings which broke the rest of three beings as they lay down to rest that night. If Frederick had not decided that he already loved the fair girl, who had been his playmate from childhood, and had cast to the winds the

thoughts that any reasons connected with her birth could prevent his asking her to be his wife. It was a decision that came very near that point.

And if Mary was not fully convinced that she so loved Frederick—that were any such event to occur, which his more than wonted tenderness induced her to believe might be probable—she equally determined that although the happiness of her life would be destroyed by rejecting him—reject she would the offer of that noble friend, rather than for a moment, peril his worldly position by accepting that which her gentle heart and well directed mind told her she would be a sacrifice to his affection.

And Miss Handley, how did she decide the question? Solely, that a man possessed of the means of selecting a wife in any class of society, and whose wealth did not require any addition, would be as mad to lose the chance of obtaining

such a girl as her beloved Mary, as would she be fortunate in obtaining such a husband. Above all, as every feeling of her heart's affection was centered in those two beings, and her loved Augusta, the only addition to her happiness she coveted, would be to see them for ever united, that day by day she might watch their increasing joy ; and even be teacher to the children of him, she had taught—and with these thoughts nearest to her heart, she knelt and prayed to God to direct all things that such might be His will.

It was a dreary drenching summer's morning ; the most desolate of all weathers in such a season, when one looks for sun and brightness, that Frederick Passmore hastened down to breakfast, ere his carriage came round to convey him towards London—but her he loved was there before him.

Mary Coddington was busily engaged in performing one of the most pleasing duties of women—the simple preparation of the morning meal.

“How kind—how very kind, dear Mary,” exclaimed Frederick, “to rise thus early to prepare my breakfast; surely you will be fatigued ere night, and this dull, dreary morning, I have half a mind to renounce my intended trip to London, and write to others, both to do the duty I had in prospect, as also for a few friends to join us here, to enliven the old Hall.”

“No, dear Frederick, no; you will do no such thing,” boldly replied the fair tea-maker. “You decided last evening, it was your duty to go—do not, for the first time in your life, allow what, after all you must admit, are selfish feelings to interfere with that which, a moment’s consideration will convince you, is your duty—besides, dear friend, you promised to make some enquiries in reference to George Radstock, who, you recollect, belongs to your estate.”

“You are right—you are right, dear girl. So I am off. Let me hear often from you; kiss

my dear sister for me, and be mindful of your own precious health."

The servant entered the room to announce that the carriage was at the door ; and Frederick, for the first time, since they had been children, folded the sweet girl in his arms, as he then thought with feelings of brotherly affection ; but which, ere he had gone twenty miles on his journey, his heart convinced him had nothing to do with the matter.

CHAPTER V.

“Stand not amazed : here is no remedy.”

WHILE matters were thus passing at the Hall, let us take a peep into the kitchen-parlour of Ashton-farm, and we shall find farmer Winter pulling on his strong shoes, previous to going forth to his rural duties. While the servant-of-all-work was doing precisely that which the fairer

Mary had been doing for his landlord—that is preparing the breakfast; the tenant Winter was in high glee, for the soaking rain, which had caused so much depression to Frederick Passmore, was to him as a shower of gold—the season had been a dry one, and rain alone was wanting to secure the glories of the harvest in fulness and luxuriance.

“Rain at last,” said Winter, “let it rain all day—the more the better for the crops. They wanted it sadly—the turnips will now raise their heads again—so let me have a rasher, a good thick one too, for this weather cheers and gives me an appetite.”

Thus is it. What is one man’s joy is another’s misery; and yet, for all that, the world we live in, more particularly that little portion of it. Our merrie England is a beautiful and pleasant abiding place, if man, by his follies and his sins did not endeavour make it otherwise.

Farmer Winter, just then, however, cared for no man, save his own precious self, or woman either—at the moment all he thought of was the splashing rain against the windows, and a wish that it might splash on till night-fall.

Having done his duty towards the substantials set before him, he prepared to walk forth, notwithstanding the shower. When about to lift the latch, however, he was met face to face by the village postman—a somewhat unusual visitor, and by no means a welcome one; for farmer Winter hated the receipt of letters, still more so the necessity of answering them, and although he occasionally had received little tittle-tattle communications from his sisters in London, he rarely, if ever, replied to them—indeed, scarcely read them ere they were committed to the flames; but this morning two letters were placed in his hands.

“Here, Mr. Winter,” said the postman,

“there be two letters for thee this morning, and as one is marked immediate, I have tramped up with it myself.”

“Well, thank you—thank you ; but immediate or not, I cannot stop to read them now, for I must go down to see that they have not commenced on the twenty acre field, or all the hay will be spoilt.”

And without further comment, he placed the letters in his pocket, and wishing the astonished postman, who had never previously believed that there lived a man with so little curiosity, “Good day,” they parted.

But the postman was, in a great measure, right, as far as human nature is concerned, for no sooner had Winter turned the corner of a little copse, and therefore placed himself out of sight, than forthwith he broke the seal of the letter marked immediate—the contents of which were as follows :

“DEAR SIR,

“As I have been known to you and known to your family since childhood, I think it the act of a friend to inform you, that your elder sister is married, I believe, to a person named Clarke—Jacob Clarke—whom you may remember as having once visited Ashton. If you think proper to come to London to see into matters, and will inform me of the hour of your arrival, I will be at the coach-office to meet you, and give you all the information in my power,

“Yours,

“GEORGE RADSTOCK.”

“D—— it,” said Winter, replacing the

letter in his pocket, "and this is the end of all her school learning. She never shall cross the threshold of Ashton-farm again, as the wife or not the wife of that hypocritical republican. Go for her—no not I—let her look to herself, as shall I to my farm."

But the other letter, it is necessary to read that also, and he did so—it came from his aunt, whom he had only once seen in his life, and for whom he cared far less than for the cow which he nearly fell over on his way across the mead.

" 'Dear Nephew.' "Dang it—this is from my aunt—then there is something in the wind, truly."

"DEAR NEPHEW,

"Your sister, my niece, was received into my house kindly—she has gone

away unkindly, not even having wished me good bye. I am informed, by a young man who calls himself George Radstock, that she has allied herself in marriage with a chartist delegate, named Jacob Clarke. She may have pleased herself, and, doubtless, so far she was right ; but as I neither admire chartists, or clearly see the position of delegates, and as I have some good feeling for the girl, your remaining sister, who has not, as yet, eloped from my roof, I would suggest that you come hence per coach, and convey her home, to prevent her following her sister's foolish example.

“ YOUR AUNT MARTHA.”

“ Confound them both,” said the farmer,
“ I should have thought less of it, had they

both run away in the winter ; but to take such a step at this busy season, and wish me to go up to London. Confound them, I say, for silly girls. I'll break this chartist fellow's neck whenever I meet him," continued the tall farmer, whirling his heavy stick in the air, again and again—"I'll be hanged if I don't."

"You will be hanged if you do," replied a voice immediately behind him ; and turning round, who should he discover but the identical fellow, whose head he had sworn to break.

"Now," said Mr. Jacob Clarke, with his usual coolness and effrontery, "now, my dear brother-in-law—for so the banns of matrimony and the force of love have made me—you are a tall man, and a strong one too, you have also a big stick in your hand, and look extremely excited, whereas I am a small man, have no stick, and, moreover, am not only particularly

cool, but also remarkably damp and hungry; for having travelled through the night outside the coach, and having only recently arrived at the former home of my beloved wife, your sister; where hearing you had walked forth, I ventured to follow, and as my time is short for the brotherly intercourse I desire to have with you therefore, I am sure it will be far more agreeable to us both that we should forthwith return to your snug parlour, where you can give me something warm—and we can speak calmly and quietly, and agreeably, as brothers should do; in the mean time you can think over your determination of breaking my head afterwards. Your doing so, however, you must recollect, will entail on you the necessity of providing for my widow at home, should the government not provide for you abroad.”

Notwithstanding his rising anger at the cool effrontery with which the chartist delegate and

husband of his sister had accosted him, it was utterly impossible to resist laughing at his audacity.

“Well, Mr. Delegate,” replied Winter, “perhaps it may be as well that we should proceed home rather than remain chatting here in the rain; however, your arrival here may prevent the necessity of my going to London, which, just at this time of the year, would be very inconvenient to me, do you see, and at any time disagreeable.”

“Excuse me, my dear sir, if I disagree with you on this point. London, in my opinion, is the only place where mind is fully appreciated; true it is a charming country here and hereabouts, your flowers do look gay, your foliage green, and your rivers sparkling. And, by-the-bye, those are remarkably fine cabbages in your garden—finer, indeed, than I ever saw in Covent Garden market; order a few to be put up in a basket for your dear sister, and a

duck or two, they eat well this season of the year with everything green."

The ire of Winter was rising again, still the idea of not going to London was something, and he calmed himself as he turned towards home.

CHAPTER VI.

“It is too true an evil, gone she is.”

At length they entered the house, when throwing himself into a chair, Jacob expressed himself as being remarkably tired and hungry, and having hinted to Farmer Winter that some refreshment would be acceptable, which was forthwith

ordered, he turned to his newly made brother-in-law and said, with the greatest possible coolness,

“ Now, brother, a word or two on business matters, for, doubtless, you are as anxious to return to your hay-fields as I am to hie me back to the seat of legislation. In a few words then, love thrives in London better, perhaps, than it does in the country, that is to say it comes sooner to maturity, like cucumbers in a hot-bed. There is less billing and cooing, few shady lanes, and moonlight meetings. Time is too important in the city to a man of business to lose it in flirtations. Man there sees a fine girl, speaks out boldly, swears he loves her to distraction ; the lady he adores feels it delightful to be loved to distraction—blushes—you extend your arms—you close them and seal the compact of her future happiness on her lips. Such was the case with your beauteous sister ; I saw her twice at her

aunt's. On the first occasion, I thought she was a charming girl; at second sight I paid her those attentions which a man of mind naturally would pay to a charming girl; on the third, we preferred a walk by moonlight instead of a hot seat in a theatre; the hour—the beauty of the night—the sentiments which attracted us, and what not, brought my half formed declaration to a crisis. I spoke the words, love to admiration; she replied, 'love to distraction.' The following day I procured a license—which cost a matter of two pounds ten—and we were made man and wife. I am now your brother-in-law. I have told my story as briefly as possible, and hope you will congratulate your sister on her choice."

"Why, as to that, I will be frank with you; I would sooner have seen my sister dead, than she should have married a discontented char-tist; but she is old enough to know her own mind, and I wish her well; but recollect, she

comes not here again with any of the rebellious notions which you may have taught her. I did think when my old landlord died that things were not likely to go on so well as formerly. And for a moment the opinions you expressed when last you visited these parts had some weight with me—in fact I began to imagine that we farmers had some reasonable ground of complaint. But look you—when I found that young Squire Passmore had expressed more liberal opinions than old Squire Passmore; moreover, that he intended to live among us, and instead of raising our rents, that he was prepared to lower them if any one could give reasonable grounds for their being lowered—moreover, that he by no means intended to interfere with the opinions of any man on his estate, I for one determined to do my best towards him as a tenant. So if you are come here to talk of chartism and discontent, the sooner you are off the better, for I will have none of it.”

“ Be calm my dear brother-in-law, be calm, I entreat you. I came here to speak of your beloved sister, and her affairs. As for chartism, you must recollect I have served as a delegate, and as I once heard an illustrious gentleman—who had received a comparative sinecure of two thousand a-year from the tories—say, when addressing a younger servant of the public, who had also received benefit from the same quarter,—‘ My dear young friend, now our party are out, and the whigs are in, it will be as well that you keep your sentiments to yourself. I do not approve of the measures of the government, but what of that, your disagreeing with things in general, and things in particular, however honest your opinions, is a matter of moonshine—take my advice, pocket your salary, and be what the law of nature requires you : a whig to-day, tory to-morrow, if you get anything by it—what does it matter—you only do that which your betters have done before you, and will again.’ Now dear Robert—

Robert is your name, is it not—I had the good sense to act precisely in accordance with these suggestions ; when I was a chartist delegate I was paid for my trouble, and consequently, I preached the spirit of chartism which leads to discontent, sadness, and disaffection ; but now that I am the husband of the late Miss Winter, I have determined to renounce chartist opinions, and preach contentment, freedom, and happiness.”

“ Well, and danged if I’m not glad to hear it, so give us your hand, brother, if you are so and I’ll be mighty glad to see you at Ashton.”

“ Well, well my good friend, I thought as much. But, first to enable me to renounce the high position I hold as a delegate of the people—I must receive a quarterly salary, from your estate equal to that I resign. If I err not, when your beloved parent who is now with his forefathers in the church below, at the village, died, he left a will—and that will set

forth that the sum of five thousand pounds in the funds, on their attaining the age of twenty-one, or marrying with your consent, was to be divided equally between Miss Winter and her sister; further, it declared that in case of the demise of your worthy self, previous to these young ladies, that a freehold property now under your control, was also to be equally divided, together with the lease of the estate called Ashton farm. Now, it is my anxious wish, should you think fit to approve of the marriage—which I cannot doubt—that as—the funds are at this moment high—you will sell out the little stock above named, and having divided it, hand over the amount belonging to Mrs. Jacob Clarke. I shall then resign my position, an honourable one as it is, of chartist delegate, and leave this merry land for a more sunny clime, where taxes are utterly unheard of, and poor-rates paid in air.”

To the utter astonishment of the cool-headed

delegate, whose harangue had been carelessly received. Farmer Winter looked him full in the face, and said :—

“ I have no objection to your plans, whatever, Mr. Clarke. You have my consent to your marriage, simply that being married, I cannot unmarry you. Therefore it is as well to let well alone, things might have been worse ; and as for your going to a sunny land, or to the shores of Egypt, I was about to say, why should it please you and your wife—of course I will aid you to the utmost of my power. In fact I see nothing against your arrangements,” added Winter, with a broad grin now on his full face—“ but.”

“ But what,” said Jacob.

“ Why, simply, that my respected parent left five hundred pounds to be divided precisely as you mention, instead of five thousand, and as regards the little freehold—why you see, my life is about as good as theirs, so you must wait.”

It would be difficult to describe the effects of this speech on the chartist delegate ; the face which a moment previously had borne the stamp of impertinent assurance, now became as pale as ashes, and every muscle moved in nervous agitation and excitement. The man, however, had been too long accustomed to play a part on the theatre of life, to allow this agitation to unnerve him, and with an attempt to laugh off the effects, he replied :—

“ Why, Winter, you are merry this morning, the weather is cheering, and 'tis well and kind to receive the news of your sister's marriage so well—so the five thousand is five hundred is it, Winter—ha—ha—ha, so you intend to have the remainder to yourself, ha—ha, very good ; so the sum is five hundred.”

“ Yes, it is, I repeat, Mr. Clarke—and not one farthing more or less.”

“ Then,” said the chartist, being satisfied from Winter's manner, that he was in earnest,

“ I am ruined and cajoled—ruined, for I have given up my post as chartist delegate ; and cajoled, because I was informed your sister had one half off the five thousand pounds.”

“ Then he who told you, I repeat, told you that which is false. However, she has made her bed, and such as it is she must lay on it—but, understand, me I expect you will do justice to this poor girl, whom you have misled, I imagine, from the sole cause that you fancied she had money—but you will bear in mind that the little she has is still in my safe keeping, and I am not bound to give my consent to your marriage until I know how it may turn out. If, however, you treat my sister as a man, and I hear that she is happy, I shall then, when called on, deliver up that which is hers ; I conclude our business is now ended. You see the sun shines brightly, I must be off to my affairs on the farm—and you, I conclude, must be anxious to return to your wife ; should you see

her sister, tell her, if she wishes for a home under the roof of her brother, the sooner she returns to it the better, or she will meet with some one ready to divide the five thousand—one word more, should you encounter that unhappy boy, George Radstock—tell him he has well nigh broken his mother's heart; and that if he desires to recover the respect of his neighbours, he had better come down to Lindford again, and follow the plough as honestly as his brother, instead of passing a vagabond life in London. Good morning, good morning, Mr. Jacob, we part as friends—beware we become not enemies.”

Jacob left Ashton farm with less hasty steps than he had entered it, and with spirits much subdued, and having passed the public house in the village of Lindford, where he had once preached chartist opinions of discontent, he walked forward till the coach overtook him, on which he travelled to London.

A few evenings subsequent, to the conversation which took place at Ashton farm, two men were walking slowly along the mall of St. James's Park, the one was our friend Jacob, the other a tall and intelligent looking young man, neatly dressed, and altogether, very respectable in appearance, this was George Radstock.

“Well, Jacob, so you have visited the golden vale of Lindford, and Ashton Farm. Againseen farmer Winter and his pigs, and since you have been there you appear to be entirely ruralised—for my part, I am contented to look on these noble trees—if one must needs have trees at all—life, in my opinion, must be passed among men, and where do you find them, save in London. The only place, believe me, where powers of mind are valued and fortunes made. When I lived in the country, people spoke of the green fields and the beauties of nature, the singing of birds, and they work and toil,

and get up with the sun, and go to bed with the sun—and believe themselves free, but are, nevertheless, slaves; such were the sentiments you taught me. I believe them to be true. Look at these haughty millionaires who ride in gilded carriages; look at these idle gaping dandies on their fine horses. These are fair emblems of freedom, are they not—while you and I, and such as you and I, are doomed to slave for a crust, that they may live in idleness and luxury. I for one will not be a slave, and the sooner the chartists rise and enforce justice from the legislature, if they will not grant it, the better say I; my motto is, something or nothing; and the sooner we are really free the better. London, I tell you, Jacob, is the only place to learn what is what—and I shall lose no time.”

“Be dad and you have lost no time friend George, in fact you are going faster than ever I went in my life. Well, a good master gene-

rally has a good pupil. And what with my lessons and London life, you have well earned your position of a delegate. But I am now a married man, and to tell you the truth, since I have visited the country again, I do assure you that more contentment exists than I had hitherto imagined; but look you, George, you have been misled, or my fair sister-in-law, who appears to be your guiding star, had some motive in telling you that her future inheritance would be the half of five thousand pounds, a fact as I believed, but which our worthy friend Winter has proved to me a fiction. I am blessed with a wife, it is true, a young lady of most polished manners, manners learnt at a country boarding-school; she is fond of fine bonnets, bustles, and novel readings, expensive tastes for a poor man, who has allied himself to a fortune of two hundred and fifty pounds instead of five thousand, and this subject to the will of farmer Winter. However, I am tel-

ling you no news, save in the matter of money ; on this point, however, being forewarned, you are fore-armed, therefore, pause before you join in the family circle."

"You surprise me, Clarke ; who told you that Miss Winter had two thousand pounds surely it must have existed only in your own imagination. I was not even aware she had a hundred, and as for any idea of marrying, you forget my age."

"Well, well, all in good time, but I tell you fairly, I had some idea of resigning my position among the order, which, fortunately I have not finally done. Had it been two thousand five hundred that my beloved wife could demand, instead of the tenth part, I should forthwith have sailed to some more favored land than that of taxes and poor-rates, where my sweet bride would have sat under a cedar tree, in a large straw hat, while I took my ease and my pipe ; as it is, she must renounce novels,

pink bonnets, pianos and flowers, and look to the home comforts of a chartist delegate—see that my beef steaks are tender and chops done to a turn, fill my pipe, perhaps read the *Democrat* aloud, on Sunday evenings, and go to bed early.”

“ Well, you know best, but I conceive it is your intention to do your duty to this poor girl, who, evidently attracted by your favored position, has allied her fortunes with yours, recollect she has ever known a comfortable home—this she has no longer—and although the sum you say she possesses, is smaller than you believe it to be, still there is wherewith to enter into some business, in which, if we succeed in obtaining the charter, you may thrive ; at all events I have known her, and received kindness at her hands, from my childhood, and I fancy you will not attempt to make her life less happy than it has been ; of one thing be assured, I am no longer a boy, and if I find

her wronged, neither our chartist alliance or intimacy shall prevent my protecting her."

"Bravo, Mr. George Radstock, you advance as do the times, truly you are no longer a boy, and I judged correctly when I told you that the primrose bedecked meads of Lindford was no fair field for such as you; in the mean time, lad, there are other matters more important than our private affairs to be attended to. The presentation of this formidable petition is to be discussed to-night, at the society, and we must both attend. It is now on the strike of seven, so let us turn towards the Horse Guards—sham guards, useless, over dressed, over paid, pampered hirelings, protectors of drawing-room dandies, useless gilded encumberers of trade, who take from the hard earnings of the people, we must look to them."

Such is the language of chartists towards the noble defenders of their country, and their homes—pity that such men could not emigrate

to the continent, where fraternity and glory would soon lead them to discover, there is nothing like home. But this un-English feeling will ever exist, while those whose education and position alone ought to suffice to teach them better than to employ their time and talent in misleading a suffering people, having no thought or object in life but self.

The two men passed onwards, down the Park, crossed through the Horse Guards, where Mr. Clarke halted for a moment to make some coarse remarks in reference to the two fine and splendidly mounted men, who, like marble statues kept guard beneath the portals, thence walked up Charing Cross and the Strand, reached Norfolk Street, where having entered the abode of Mrs. Jones, I shall leave them.

CHAPTER VII.

"In wholesome counsel to his unstayed youth."

IN a handsomely furnished apartment in Park Street, about ten in the morning, sat young Frederick Passmore, in morning gown and slippers; the breakfast was on the table, as also the daily papers, on the opposite side of

the table was his friend Miravale, occupied in sipping his coffee, and making occasional observations on the leading articles; parliament was still assembled, and London was full—when is it not?

“Well, Fred,” said Miravale, “you have lost your good father—a great loss—a father can never be replaced, at least so good a one as yours, and you are left, if I err not, with vast possessions. So vast that your duty to your country will be one of no common order, and I feel assured you will do it nobly and well.”

“Such will be my endeavour, Miravale, with God’s aid. You say truly I have lost a good father, and my means are large, but I covet not the possession of means unless I can see those around me happy.”

“Well, we must first get you into parliament, there your abilities may do much, your wealth and country influence more, for the good of

the people. As I told you, Mr. Brand takes the Chiltern Hundreds, so the sooner you announce your intention of standing for the county the better, while the field is clear."

"I shall do so Miravale, without loss of time, but I fear our opinions as regards the comfort and happiness of the people may not entirely coincide ; and allow me at once to say that it will be a source of comfort to me that you dis-connect yourself with these discontented men, who, sooner or later will bring you into trouble ; at this moment you doubtless judge my opinions as erroneous, but the day will come, and that sooner than you expect, when some treasonable move will be made, the mob will be put down, not by the force of arms, but by the rising of all right minded men, to exterminate a feeling which is the curse of this now peaceful and glorious country, and you, and such as you, will be left to suffer for their evil doings. I beseech you, dear friend, ere yet it

is too late to disconnect yourself from these people ; understand me, however, I am far, very far from wishing that you should not firmly and mercifully support, as a legislator, all proper and desirable reforms, but this must be done by your own voice, in your place in parliament, and by your conduct towards your fellow men out of it, and not by the means of your wealth, and the physical force of a set of men whom I look on as nothing better than the scum of the earth. But you promised you would let me see this misguided lad, George Radstock, I must save him if I can, for the sake of her with whom I told you I hoped one day to share my happiness."

"You will see him this morning, Fred, for he promised he would come, and I requested he would meet me here."

The words were scarcely uttered ere the servant entered the room to announce that Mr.

Radstock had called with a desire to see his master.

“Show him up, show him up at once,” replied Frederick Passmore.

And George was introduced.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Oh, heinous, strong, and bold conspiracy !”

THE first prompting of Frederick's kind heart was that of welcoming the visitor ; for notwithstanding all his faults, it must be borne in mind that they had not met for long years, and when the name was announced, Fred's

mind flew back to scenes of earlier days, when the labourer's son and the Eton boy had gone forth together in search of sport or rural pastime when the pursuit of the moment had at all events placed them on an equal footing. Moreover, recollections of his poor mother, and above all, the kind wishes of his own dearly loved Mary, all combined to make his heart befriend him, whose presence, for the moment, had caused him to forget he was no longer a boy, a fact made evident, however, when a tall and intellectual-looking man, who, with a courteous but by no means humble bow to his former playmate, but now the lord of those lands, on which his father had, as his brother now laboured, took the chair which was offered.

All feelings, save those having reference to the wishes of Mary Coddington, vanished the moment the presence of the man erased the thoughts of the boy. He who had left a hum-

ble yet honest home, from ill-directed feelings, and imprudent ambition, to follow a course leading to destruction, a member of the chartist association, a chartist delegate—one among the number, who unquestionably were honourable in their views, yet who would stop at nothing to gain the ends which he imagined to be just.

“I was solicited by my friend, Mr. Miravale,” said Frederick, “to request your presence here, solely on the grounds of interest, which I, personally, and those dear to me, take in the welfare of your unhappy mother, whom you so cruelly deserted, and no less so in behalf of your honest, hard-working brother. Would I could add, in recollection of those days, when as a boy, you were wont to visit the Hall, of which the death of my father has made me owner, and as such, I feel it my duty to look to the welfare of those born on and belonging to the estate. You have selected

your own course, and are now at an age that probably would induce you to believe that it is presumption on my part that I thus question you—not on your own account, however, do I so far presume, as you must be the best judge of the advantages arising, and likely to arise, from the course you have adopted; but before you go farther, for the sake of former days, when we were boys together, though you have forfeited all claim on me, I would desire that you think well on the subject ere you decline the protection I am still willing to offer you for the sake of your family. Are you then ready to return to the happy vales of Lindford; or, pardon me, Miravale, still determined to pursue those wild theories which can only end in destruction to yourself and misery to thousands.”

“I came here, Mr. Passmore,” said Radstock, “at the request of Mr. Miravale, not to discuss the merits of what I was, or the advantages of

what I am, but, as I believed, that of a suffering people's freedom from the shackles which now bind them as slaves to wealth and aristocracy—I am willing to believe, that you are not among the number, who will either oppress or do injustice to those beneath you, and were a I, as you are, I might be induced—not to follow Farmer Winter's plough, for the wages that would not feed a hound—to pursue some other course; in the meantime, from what I have heard, there are likely to be few landlords like you, Mr. Passmore, and were there so, the people have still much to complain of. There are six millions of male adults who have now no legislative existence, it is therefore imperatively necessary they should be included in the catalogue of persons, who, by right, are entitled to the electoral franchise. Moreover, these millions of men are not soliciting a favour from the legislature, but desire it most emphatically and distinctly to be understood

that they claim it as a right which belongs to one man as much as to another.

‘ I consider every man who has completed his twenty-first year ought to have the power of voting at elections of members to serve in Parliament. I also consider that in order the more effectually to enable electors to record their votes, free from interference or dictation, voting should proceed by ballot, and that the duration of parliament as at present constituted is a grievance, affording solely corrupt opportunities of sacrificing the interests of their constituents to promote their own personal views, as also depriving the electoral body of that vigilant control which is so essential in making the House of Parliament the representatives of popular will. I am, therefore, of opinion that the election of members should occur annually ; and as legislative talents and patriotism are not always allied to genius, and the capacity to govern, what is now termed

property qualification, should be abolished, and in future the only qualification required to constitute a British senator, should be maturity of age, and the free choice of the constituents, and the nation having no right to the time or labour of any citizen without rendering a proper equivalent, and in order that poverty shall be no impediment to senatorial distinction it would be desirable that services of members be remunerated.

“ I consider, Mr. Passmore, that the present electoral decision of the country is most unsatisfactory, unfair, and absurd, and in order to its effectual remedy, and the establishment of an electoral division consistent with reason and equity—the present prevailing method ought to be discontinued forthwith, and henceforth the population should be the basis of all electoral divisions, and to that end I conceive that the United Kingdom should be divided into several hundred electoral districts, each of such

sweeping denouncement of all further reference, neither do I quite go the length of Mr. Radstock."

"Well well, Miravale, I fear not but that you will soon think differently. As regards Mr. Radstock, I own I am no less astonished at the advance he has made in revolutionary sentiments, than am I grieved to find one who but yesterday was living among honest and hard working men, and with simple, but respected parents, far from, and with little knowledge of the world's evils, should have selected a cause which must lead, believe me, not to the advancement which he calculates, but to his ruin. It is evident, however, that he is not prepared to listen to any advice I can offer. I trust, however, for the sake of the country which I love, and the people I would desire to see happy, that your theories will never be put in practice. Probably, Mr. Radstock, you are one of those who desire to

abolish the army and navy ; and deprive those who have fought the battles of your country of their hard earned pittance."

" No, sir, not exactly that—still I think that the men of England can defend England without being paid for it, or wearing red coats."

" So far you speak truly, if you infer that the yeomen of England, and all true-hearted Englishmen would rise, as a body, to defend their homes and country from a foreign foe. Aye, even the women of England too. But it is as well that this foreign foe should not come. Yet I am not one of those who believe that such a thing is impossible in these days of steam—did they come, however, it would be never to return—in the meantime, much blood might be spilt, much misery entailed on many dear to us. Therefore it is better no foreign power should be so rash ; and believe me, the best way of preventing it, is by being true to

ourselves. Those who would desire to disturb the peace at home will be the last in the hour of danger, and the first to call for the aid of those whom they now desire to denounce as England's destroyers; recollect, with you, and such as you now are, Mr. Radstock, the true yeomen of England have no feeling in common, they stand without rivals in the world—it is not with you, and men with opinions such as you possess even, that I class honest and patriotic citizens—no, no, such men are for peace at home—but war to the knife against the invader, or what is even worse, the promoters of civil dissension—and listen, I beg you, while I add those that you, and such as you, are now allied with; who denounce the rich land-owners and aristocracy. Many, indeed most, of whom have gained that station by deeds in those services, you would desire to crush—or by other patriotic actions equally deserving their country's gratitude, and not, believe me, by speculation or

rebellion. The greatest blessing of this country—in which alone the true spirit of freedom is known—arises from the fact that there is no class to whom distinction is not open as a reward of honest exertion—ours is no exclusive aristocracy; no man can say that the nobles have no sympathy in feeling and action with the other branches of the constitution—on the contrary—if there is any fault which I should be disposed to impute to them, it is that they are sometimes too regardless of the duty which in virtue of their position especially devolves on them.”

“Your assertions may be true, sir—but the people, nevertheless, are as yet miserably represented, slaves; subdued and kept under by the class you represent. When was a lord known to acknowledge the citizen. When the aristocracy of wealth known to give a helping hand to the democracy of hard labour. Pride, sir, rules all in power, and none possess it more than the aristocracy of wealth.”

“ Let this conversation end between us, Mr. Radstock, ere I forget that I am in the presence of one who was born on the land of my forefathers, and whom I would willingly have aided to return there ; yet, before we part, perhaps for ever, I would once more tend to you my protection, because nature is weak and erring, and I hold not that my own opinions are all correct ; though I would desire to serve mankind to the best of my abilities, rather than teach them misery as you would. Have you any other remarks to make, or do you accede to my wishes.”

“ Yes, I have—my determination is fixed to stand or fall with those with whom I am now connected. I believe you would serve me, but I owe a duty to my country, as well as you. I have endeavoured to describe my sentiments—by those shall I abide. I would trust that a British parliament will have the wisdom to listen to the petition of the people which

will soon be placed before them, if not, the people will have cause to make them."

"Then, sir, whatever respect I may have for many of the petitioners, I cannot conceal my abhorrence for their doctrines. Suffering as the people may be—doubtless are—yet I consider the overthrow of the venerable institutions which would be involved in their demands, would lead to far greater suffering. Our national institutions are too precious, and the arrangements of society in this country too intricate to put them to the hazard of universal suffrage, and nothing shall ever persuade me to advocate the views of the charter. Universal suffrage would institute pure democracy for the monarchy under which we live, and under which we have lived, more free and happy than all other nations. Renounce your idle views, return to the peaceful lot of an honest yeoman, and I will aid you—continue in your course—and though the fate to which your

conduct may lead you, will be a sad one—
you will then recollect, on your own head
will fall the punishment from which your
friends would have saved you.”

CHAPTER IX.

"'Tis beauty all and grateful sound around!"

I must now pass over a long period from that which noted the above conversation, a period which scarcely less affected the places, than the people we have endeavoured to delineate.

Frederick Passmore had entered parliament

having gained a successful election, and large majority ; his views were liberal ; with a mind so formed, and a heart so noble, they scarcely could be otherwise. I say his sentiments could scarcely be otherwise than liberal, while his whole life appeared to be centered in the happiness and prosperity of those around him, and belonging to him ; he lived the greatest portion of the year on his estate of Lindford, enjoying the society of friends dear to him ; entering into the sports of the field as a sportsman, spending his large means among his own people, administering to their wants by example and practise, and happy in their general esteem.

The vale of Lindford, like all other places, however, was feeling the advance of civilisation, such is the term which converts villages into towns, and ale houses into hotels ; so fared it with the hitherto quiet village which bore the name of the estate ; where formerly there existed only one good ale-house, at which the

honest landlord, whom I introduced during the visit of Jacob Clarke, brewed and drank his own beer, cured his own bacon, and grew his own beans; there is now a rival, besides two beer-shops; railway surveyors were also seen looking about the beautiful vale; the chartist petition had been presented and rejected by a majority of two hundred and twenty-one members of the house, and the hopes of George Radstock were almost at an end.

In the mean time he had played no boy's game in the great battle of democracy; from a delegate he had risen to be a leader, and a leader likely to place his neck in a halter; Clarke also, disappointed at his failure in securing an independence, by the lottery of marriage, had continued his career, side by side with Radstock, selfish from the beginning, selfish to the last; he stopped at nothing, save absolute necessity to secure means, as he endeavoured to convince his own conscience, for the good of

his fellow man ; that fellow man being his own comfort.

The parliamentary session was drawing to a close ; the London season was well nigh over, when Frederick, ever loving the pleasures of the country, and the joys of home, once more found himself amid the ripening oats of Lindford. Time had made little change in his affections towards those still beneath his roof, save that while his mind daily and hourly convinced him that the lovely girl, with whom he had lived from childhood, was becoming more and more necessary to his existence, as to his very happiness. His life had now but one thought, which was that of calling her his own.

He had also watched with happiness the increasing affection which appeared to have taken root in the heart of two other beings most dear to him, his sister and his friend Miravale, who of late had been a frequent visitor at the Hall ; his only desire being that

Miravale should disconnect himself from the disaffected democrats, and with such feelings he had more than once pleaded his cause with his sister.

He walked across the park, early one morning, on his way to visit the aged rector of Lindford, to discuss some village matters, in which they were both interested ; for, like all true-hearted and noble-minded men, there were few matters, however trifling, connected with the rural districts, by which he was surrounded, in which he did not take an interest, whether it was simply a question of rearing an urchin as a village scholar, or the more important and praiseworthy one of soothing and aiding the aged and unfortunate ; in all which generous duties the venerable pastor was ever the foremost to urge, and the last to prevent.

He had crossed the splendid park, and marked, with an eye of one who loves such noble specimens of nature, many a gnarled and ancient oak, beneath whose widely ex-

tended branches herds of deer sought shelter from the rays of an early August sun, and merging from the park, which led into a waving corn-field, made gay by the bright red poppy flowers scattered among the graceful corn ripening ready for the sickle ; it was a calm and lovely morning, bright and cheerful to the mind of man—tenfold more so to him whose conscious rectitude knew little care or crime, save that allotted to the most virtuous, who walks on God's fair earth—for whether rich or poor, high or low, sinful is our nature, and far less the meed of praise to him, who, blessed with the gift of this world's goods, allows the tempter, Satan, to cross his onward path in well doing.

In the very fulness of joy at the Heaven's blueness, and the sun's brightness, the lark carolled in the air, as if by its cheerful note it would fain bless Him, who is ever mindful of man's joys, by thus preparing a bounteous har-

vest. It was amid scenes such as these Frederick, bent on a good purpose, walked cheerfully forwards. Few men's hearts knew the rest with which his was filled at that moment—he knew himself beloved by her whom he now idolised, and he felt more, that when the hour came, and it soon would come, for it wanted only a few months of his sister becoming of age, when, having secured to her possession of the large means she could then claim as her own, and fulfilled all that brotherly duty and affection dictated; he might claim as a wife, her to whom, for years, he had been so devoted a friend.

Moreover, he knew himself well-loved by his tenantry and neighbours, and he felt he had endeavoured to do his duty to man as he desired to do it towards his God; with such feelings and such thoughts, all happy and calm, he walked onward with an elastic step, and countenance beaming with benevolence; pass-

ing through the glorious corn-fields, he next entered a bean-field — few more fragrant perfumes than that arising from this homely food for man and beast, and few more valuable to the farmer—stopping to inhale its sweet perfume, Frederick recollected that the path he was pursuing led towards Ashton-farm—and he had promised a visit to Farmer Winter.

“But no,” said he, “time is important to-day, I must go there to-morrow.”

The thought, however, had scarcely passed through his mind, ere, advancing from the side of a small plantation, which sheltered the way he was pursuing, there emerged a female form. As she approached nearer, Frederick, at once, perceived it was the figure of the youngest Miss Winter. She had never been a favourite at the Hall, inasmuch as all had believed, though scarcely with justice, that she was the sole cause of George Radstock’s conduct. As she came nearer, however, her now plain and

close drawn straw bonnet and simple but not inelegant dress, so different from the former flaunty apparel, with which the Winter girls were won't to bedeck themselves, gave Frederick reason to hope that she also had altered in mind as well as apparel, and with such hope he accosted her kindly—asking after her brother and friends, naming the beautiful weather as conducive to a favourable harvest—and lastly, he added, with some warmth in his manner,

“Do tell me, if you have any news from your sister—is she in London? or where has that unfortunate man induced her to live, while he squanders, in vagabond pursuits, the little she possesses?”

He had remarked that the poor girl, from the first moment of their meeting, was labouring under depression of spirits; and allusion to her sister convinced him that such was the case—for she instantly burst into tears.

“You say truly, sir,” she replied, between

her now convulsive sobs ; “ the lot of my poor sister is, indeed, a hopeless one—in having allied herself with that wretched man, and, I fear, too late—she has found out that the attempt—to rise beyond our position on such grounds as she would have risen—can only end in misery. And I, sir, frivolous as you have often doubtless thought me, have still always held in mind that neither money or fine dress can ever make us that to which we are not born, without mind be the guide—a mind such as she is gifted with who possesses the hearts of those around her at the Hall. It was for Miss Coddington’s counsel, her advice, her aid, and sympathy, that I was now walking to the Hall—to ask her, who, when a little girl, was wont to visit the farm of Ashton, of whom, when almost a woman, I was jealous, but whom I have now learned to love and honour, and with reason ; did you know all.”

“ I do so already, most fully and entirely,”

said the young man. "There are few, or any, to whom you could apply in the hour of sorrow with a more entire assurance of consolation and assistance; but first let me urge you to accompany me; I go on a visit to one whom all the parish esteems—one who was never known to turn a deaf ear to the voice of sorrow—one whose opinion and advice is ever given from a heart directed, in all things, by man's only true friend—his God. He will receive you kindly as he does all, rich or poor, in sorrow or in gladness. Yet, pardon me, if your tale of sadness be for woman's ear alone, then let me not detain you, but hasten to her, who will welcome you as a sister."

"No, sir, no," replied the sorrowing girl, "that which I have to tell will be soon known to all the world, and if I gain the sympathy of your own kind heart, and that of our respected pastor, I fear not but Miss Coddington will leave nothing undone to aid me—from my

brother, I can scarcely hope for reasonable assistance—he has long been estranged from my poor lost sister, and his anger is now too great for any calm consideration of her misery and grief.”

“It is then of your poor sister you would desire to speak—I feared as much—therefore let us lose no time.”

CHAPTER X.

"He thought as a sage, but he felt as a man."

Side by side as they walked, the lord of Lindford, with words of kindness, cheered the drooping girl till they reached the wicket which entered on the rector's lawn. There were few more beauteous spots than the rectory of Lindford—made far more so from

the knowledge that he who dwelt beneath that thatch covered roof was truly the friend as the pastor of his flock. The flowering myrtle, now in full bloom and fragrance, which clustered on the rustic porch, intermixed with jessamine and honeysuckle, wafted their rich odours in the fresh morning air—beautiful emblems of God's favours, bestowed on every man—had all been planted by the hand of him, who, for nearly half a century, had ministered to his rural parish, without one wish for preferment, or one desire for further wealth, which wealth, limited as it was, he liberally shared with the wants of all around him.

But let us presume on the love which descended from father to son for that dear old man, and enter his morning-room, or library, which, for many a long year, had been his accustomed resting-place, wherein he was wont to receive the visits of his poorer parishioners—perform his magisterial duties,

and wander forth, in summer-time, through the French windows to the little garden, his source of innocent delight. There is many and many a parsonage as lovely, perhaps far more lovely, amid the beautiful vales of England, than that of Lindford; but, alas! there are few such pastors—happy for those whom he all but considered as his own children—for the majority of his parishioners had grown to man's estate under his eye and ministry—he ever practised faith and charity, instead of preaching it without the practice; had his heart been laid bare to the world, few feelings would have been found there, save an entire love for God himself—evinced the proof, in his desire that all men should equally love him; and for this purpose, he showed a practical example by following His footsteps; he desired to be no bishop here on earth, he was far happier in his humble and flower-clad abode; but he desired peace in Heaven, and there were none

living to ~~whom~~ he could have denied his aid in obtaining the same.

But the old man rises from his chair, as Frederick Passmore and his companion enter, to welcome them, and lays aside the book ever in his thought—the Bible—his hair is silvery grey, his form somewhat bent by age, still no appearance of physical decay denotes itself, and the eye is as bright as a youth's of eighteen.

“Welcome, my dear boy—I should say welcome, my noble friend and patron, for such you are, though you have sat on these old knees when they were more able to bear you than they now are; what gives me the pleasure of this early visit—and Miss Winter in your company. I am glad to see you; how is your good brother, farmer Winter? all alive, I fancy, up at Ashton, for these bright suns are sent by God to gladden the heart of man, who gives a plentiful harvest for the poor—our

merciful Father, ever kind, ever thoughtful to us erring sinners—alas ! how little we deserve His every blessing. But sit down—sit down, and tell me, dear Frederick, how are my pets, Miss Augusta, and Mary, and Miss Handley, and all at the Hall.”

“All well, my dear, and venerable friend, all well ; they have commissioned me to urge you to come to Lindford Hall on a visit, for we are expecting friends, and they cannot do without you. Indeed Mary says no party is perfect without you, and none so gay as when gladdened by your presence, so come you must ; but we will talk of pleasure by-and-by. I met Miss Winter on my way, she has some tale of sorrow to impart—to whom can she tell it but to you, with hope of consolation, so I urged her to come to you, dear friend, the friend of all.”

“Well, well, Frederick, you are right so far. All I can do shall be done, with God’s aid, to

serve her, and that she must well know, for is she not one of my flock, nay, one of my children; but I had hoped it was not a tale of sadness, but of gladness; in fact that you had come to tell me of love vows, joyous to the young, of marriage feasts and rejoicings at the Hall. I had hoped before this aged body is gathered to the dust these hands would have been permitted to join those together before God's altar, whom I have pressed to my heart, and watched sleeping in the cradle; and you will yet tell me of such things, so, dear young lady, speak to me as to a partner of your sorrows, and if I can pour one word of balm into your sad heart, mine will rejoice.

"I am well aware of your goodness, kind sir," replied the poor girl, or I should not be here to tell you that which we have long feared would come to pass. Led on by a sinful desire to gain by idleness and outrage, that which by an honest course of life he might long since

have attained, urged also by some foolish desire for notoriety for I can call it nothing more, the husband of my unfortunate and deluded sister, has been taken, while heading a lawless chartist outbreak in Wales, and I fear me, the son of poor widow Radstock has shared the same fate, perhaps a worse ; for, infatuated by his mad political views, inculcated by this villain Clarke—God forgive me that I should use such terms towards him who is allied to one I love—If what we have heard be true, I will stake my life these misguided men were led on by him, who would deceive and then desert a woman. All that we have as yet learned however, is contained in a few lines from my poor unhappy sister, who seeks pecuniary aid from my brother, and permission to return to her once happy home ; you gentlemen may have heard more from the public papers. When I met Mr. Passmore I was about to tell that which I have told to you to

Miss Coddington, with the full assurance that she would have urged my brother to listen to a sister's sorrows, and aided me with her kind advice. At the moment my brother's—probably just anger against this misled man—has crushed all his better feelings, and when I left him he vowed she should never again cross the threshold of his house, if so, whatever have been her faults, how sad will be her lot.

“This is a source of grief indeed,” said Frederick, not that I feel for that vagabond, Mr. Clarke, the law has laid her iron hands upon him, may she hold him fast. But his poor wife, we must indeed befriend her to the utmost, and I should feel little for George Radstock, did I not know he has been cajoled by a set of ill disposed and selfish men, I am satisfied he is not without good qualities, which, under other guidance, would have made his lot far different ; I left the Hall so early that I had not time to open the papers ; however, I

shall hasten back, leaving my own business with my dear old friend for another day. This matter must be looked to at once ; I will write to Miravale as soon as I return, and if needs be, go myself to London.

“As for means to assist your sister, my poor girl, let not that distress you for a moment. Here, in the presence of the minister of the parish, and the friend of us all, you will not refuse aid from my hands, whose duty it is to look to the welfare of his tenants. No, no, Miss Winter, refuse me not in this trifling desire to assist ; here, take these notes, present them at once to Mrs. Clarke, and tell her to come down to the Hall—where, at all events, she will find friends—till we can enquire further into this unfortunate affair.” And turning to Mr. ———, while sobs prevented Miss Winter from expressing her gratitude, he added, “and you, I am sure, ever ready to do

an act of kindness, will give me your approval that I do simply one of duty."

"I do indeed approve of all you have said and all you desire to do in this sad, sad business; it is terrible indeed to break the laws of man, how doubly so to break the laws of God, as this unhappy man appears to have done, through life. Alas, alas, would that when conscience speaks, and speaks boldly, as a warning voice sent from above to check man in his mad career of crime, that he would pause, ere by such acts as here appear to have been committed, he not only destroys all earthly happiness, but drags others with him who perhaps but for him would have led a life of comparative innocence and happiness. Indeed there may have been lives lost in this unlawful outbreak, and if so, to him, and on his head be the blood of his victims. Yet weep not, my dear young friend, there is a home, a friend, a father of us all who can heal wounds even of a

deeper die than those which go far to break the hearts of many, in this peaceful vale.

“Recollect, however, what the scripture sayeth—‘*Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.*’ Therefore it is not for me to condemn, unheard, this fallen man, rather let us pity and endeavour to aid; the rumours which have reached you, may be exaggerated; some redeeming point may still appear to enable us to assist him, and we may still hope that those who in a measure belong to the vale of Lindford, may be brought to see the error of their ways. So I will take my stick and hat and go at once to see your brother, Miss Winter; he is a good-hearted, right-minded English yeoman, and when not carried away by excitement, will listen to his aged pastor. And do you, dear Frederick,

hasten to the Hall, you may there find letters, which will throw some light on this affair—I will join you in the afternoon ; but first let me offer you some refreshment, I ought to have done so by both of you when you entered, but I read, at once, by your looks, that something was wrong. Yes, Miss Winter, one glass, only one glass of wine will do you good—we will then walk to Ashton.”

“ You refuse,” added Frederick, “ well then, farewell for the present—we shall meet by-and-bye. Be not cast down, Miss Winter, you have friends, and true ones, who will do their best to aid you. I shall tell my sister and Miss Coddington to expect you.”

“ Many, many and grateful thanks for your kindness, Mr. Passmore, you are as you have ever been, alike, the friend to all in sorrow, or in happiness. Your truly kind heart will sum what your good actions already merit—its own reward.

Frederick Passmore returned to the Hall

with a heart more sad and steps less hasty than he had left it in the morning. Long had he anticipated the event of which he had that day been informed ; yet, while he blamed the folly of the man, whose revolutionary proceedings had, at length, caused this pain, he not the less commiserated the sorrows of those who were now grieving for his conduct.

Moreover, his beloved Mary, ever feeling nobly and kindly, had, on all occasions, urged him to endeavour to save the man with whom, hand-in-hand, she had gone to the village school, and her wishes were to him, all but commands. Having passed by a private entrance to the library—his first act was that of opening the London papers, which, with several letters, awaited his perusal. When the truth of that which he had heard was corroborated by long details of the riots and the rioters ; describing among other details, that two of the principal chartist leaders were said to have been apprehended.

These leaders were Jacob Clarke, and George Radstock ; the details, however, so far, were too limited for him to form any very right judgment of the extent of the crimes of which these misled and unhappy men were guilty, and he laid aside the paper with harassed thoughts and depressed feelings—not so much for those, who had thus, happily for the sake of a peaceful community, been stopped in their wild career, but in sympathy for those who would suffer from their crimes.

His next proceeding was that of reading the letters—the seals of which were still unbroken. The first which met his eye was one in the well known hand-writing of Miravale ; hastily he opened it, and read as follows :

“DEAR FRED,”

“ You will have heard ere this, that the chartists have risen in Wales, and

deeply do I regret to add, that, led on by men, who have no sense of justice and freedom, but that obtained by physical force, and self gain, life has been sacrificed, and property destroyed. Happy am I in the conscious knowledge that far as I have been connected with promoting a fair parliamentary discussion of the people's rights, I have ever been strenuous in my exertions to obtain these ends, wholly and solely by a just and free discussion of the merits of the people's charter before a British Parliament. You are well aware how emphatically and continually I have assured these misguided men, that the first blow struck would convert into lawless rebellion that which hitherto had been merely free discussion, and a constitutional solicitation for just representation.

“ I rejoice in the knowledge that actuated, in some measure by my esteem for you, and a firm belief in the soundness of your views, which

the conduct of your life has proved, more particularly so, by the management of your vast estates, benevolence and liberality towards all connected with you, both in public and private life, together with a forewarning that what has occurred would occur, from the folly and weakness of many reckless individuals disgracing even the name of chartist, I have long ceased to be a member of the association—and though convinced that great reform is required, never will I again connect myself with the class of men who outstep the demarcation of the law.

“I know that you will be interested in the fate of one of the unhappy men, who, among others, have been apprehended, when I tell you, it is the young man George Radstock, now a leader, the other Jacob Clarke—I have so far strong grounds for believing, that while the latter was actually arrested with arms in his hands, heading and encouraging a wild and

outrageous mob, the former, though actually heading a large concourse of persons, had recently harangued them in the Market-place, on the sole ground of obtaining their supposed rights by a fair representation to Parliament—moreover, that when excited by drink, the mob commenced that outbreak which was only put down by a military force—Radstock was endeavouring his utmost to prevent the maddened mob from proceeding to those acts which are a disgrace to the name of Englishmen. These facts fortunately can be corroborated by respectable witnesses which may be a mitigating cause for him hereafter.

“I shall be with you in a day or two, when I shall find those whose society will recompense me for the annoyance and disgust I experience from the knowledge of that which I have thus briefly detailed.

“Yours, ——”

CHAPTER XI.

Peace when he spoke dwelt ever on his tongue,

WHILE Frederick Passmore was thus engaged, the aged rector and his afflicted companion proceeded to Ashton farm.

There was still the woodbine and rose-clad covered rustic porch, where the sisters had in

earlier days so often sat in peace and happiness to view that glorious and luxuriant vale, where the golden corn now ripened in profusion; to watch the winding river which ran calmly onwards, in various, fantastic ways; to listen to the distant cattle, and the tinkling sheep bell, and look on the wide-spread woodlands—who, I say, that gazed on such a scene, but would praise God for His goodness to us erring beings here on earth, and make the heart of man respond to all the best feelings of human nature.

The old man rested awhile near the wide-spreading walnut tree, reared in years long passed, beneath whose shade many had gathered on that memorable harvest home—where the Miss Winters had first received their brother's guests, and the young Mary had worn her bridal dress—for bridal dress in truth it was, inasmuch as the heart that then desired it

given, had never ceased to regard her since with deep affection.

Here the rector paused, and turning to his young companion, bid her be of good cheer.

“Believe me, dear child,” said he, “God has not favoured man with such abundant blessings as are here presented to us, that ours should be a life of suffering—man has indeed much for which to blame himself; amid such scenes as these, with honest labour, a season of comparative happiness would be his. Your poor sister would have done well to have hesitated ere she connected herself with this erring man. ’Tis not my desire, however, to blame, but rather to induce others to forgive the sorrowing, as God is willing to forgive us even our worst of sins, so let us seek your brother.”

On entering the cottage, or rather the farm-

house, Mr. Winter soon joined them. As I have before said, he had his faults—who has not—one of his greatest, however, was that of continually complaining against the state of the weather, the crops, and the taxes—did any man ever meet with a farmer who does not—if so, he must be singularly fortunate.

Were the clouds a watering pot at his command, or the sun a forcing house at his direction, it would be the same. The very possession of a farm appears to engender such grumblings—not that I believe they mean harm by it, but they cannot help it, it is in the very nature of the man, or probably his profession ; for there are few men more noble in nature, take them all in all, than English farmers, and Mr. Winter was far from being the worst of his class, though a little pride of purse, and consequent ease as regards life, and life's cares, made him at times feel somewhat

too harshly towards his neighbour, as is the case with erring human nature in general, simply that he had rarely felt the sting of poverty, or the pangs of sorrow himself.

But the first burst of anger against his sister over, he felt more indignant at the disgrace of being allied to a felon and a traitor, than harsh towards the wife; and with such feelings he appeared before the rector, with subdued manners and forgiving thoughts.

“Well, Mr. Winter, I am glad to see you looking so well,” said the good pastor; “I need scarcely tell you, that I am here not with any intention to intrude, but solely to offer my humble advice and assistance in reference to the unhappy occurrence with which your sister has made me acquainted, and to intreat you to form no hasty opinions in regard to the conduct of those who are now in the hands of men better able than we are to judge of their crimes; be them and their ~~sins~~ with God,

who can punish and pardon. Let me beseech you, also, not to be too hard with her, who may have been misled, and who truly has erred, in her selfishness, towards those who love her—yet this is not a time to show anger, but rather to show forgiveness—this must be so, or how can we hope to be forgiven. You will receive her, I feel assured, once more to the home of your parents, and do your all to give peace to the heart of this sorrowing woman. I know I am speaking to one who has the good sense to feel that nothing you can do, in anger, will take one jot from the law's effect on him, who has broken the laws of his country and his God."

"Well, sir, you may speak truly—you are ever kind to all—but it is hard after years of honest labour, on the land where my forefathers have lived respected, to find myself thus disgraced. 'There lives the brother-in-law of a chartist leader,' says one—'a felon—

perhaps a murderer.' 'There goes the wife of the man who awaits his trial'—a trial which will probably, nay surely, must end in his condemnation, his death, for ought I know, on the gallows. I say this without one feeling against my poor sister, save the desire that she had been in her grave ere she had met with such an accursed villain. And George, poor boy, I feel for him, for his nature is not bad—he has been led away by his absurd vanity, and this vagabond Clarke—but he has not one feeling at heart in connection with such people—and if what I have heard be true, this felon has now brought him to his own level, and he will suffer too."

"No, no, Mr. Winter, let us have patience, and hope for the best—we are as yet but lightly informed on the subject. At all events, promise me, you will receive this poor girl under your protection, this is her natural home—those noble and kind-hearted beings at the

Hall will do so, even should you refuse—Radstock has many and powerful friends, and be assured, nature will, in some measure, at all events, have asserted kind feelings in his heart, and have prevented him committing any very serious act. It is of your poor sister we must first think, so let me write to her by this post, and beg her to come to the home of your pastor, who ought and desires to be a father to you all, be they sinners or sinned against, and I will bring her once more to your heart and pardon—she has a life of sadness before her, poor lamb, let it not be for us to cast the first stone.”

“Be it as you wish ; but now, sir, let me endeavour to calm my outraged feelings, for I am well nigh maddened by what has taken place, and what may follow.”

Thus they parted.

The good, old man felt that he had so far done a duty of love, and homewards he re-

turned, to kneel in humble prayer, for strength and advice from Him as to the best mode of acting to secure assistance for the fallen, and consolation for the sorrowing.

CHAPTER XII.

Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,
And study help for that which thou lamentest.

It was late in the evening of that day which commencing with unusual brightness left, with the sinking sun, many a heart which had awakened in joy, plunged in bitter sorrow, that Gelica Winter had sought

and obtained an interview with the sweet Mary Coddington.

How beautiful was the picture of human nature which presented itself, as these two young beings sat side by side, in a charming little room, which Frederick had prepared for her sole use, and fitted up with all the most refined taste could devise, the windows looking forth on a well-kept flower garden, where many contrasting and varied coloured flowers, now gilded by the last rays of the golden sun, abounded. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the spot, save the gentle delicacy and sweet expression of countenance of the one girl, as she poured forth words and assurances of aid and consolation, or the sad yet grateful expression of the other, as on the same couch, almost in each other's arms, they conversed.

Here, indeed, was a scene, which proved truly the value of mental superiority. Both

girls had been born on the same estate ; in early youth, however, their positions were almost as widely different as, at present ; then the wealthy farmer's daughter had looked down with all but scorn on the more humble cottager's child. Yet, now how altered were their positions—few even of those, descended from the highest in aristocratic station, could surpass in grace and intellect—none in disposition and true nobility of heart—her, who, moving from her seat, almost knelt at the feet of her visitor, who, subdued, sad, and grateful, listened to the sweet words of hope and encouragement, poured forth by those kind lips to the saddened and broken-hearted listener.

“ Ah, Miss Coddington, kneel not to me,” said Gelica, “ ’tis rather I should kneel to you in gratitude for all your kindness.”

“ Recollect, dear Gelica, you are in affliction ; all pride of place and worldly station are as naught when sorrow intervenes.”

And the two embraced in forgetfulness of all, save that what was sadness to the one it would be joy to the other to lighten.

“ Now, Gelica,” said Miss Coddington, “ wipe away those tears, and let us fully consider what is best to be done ; dear Frederick, dear Mr. Passmore, I should say, will not only aid this unfortunate man, if aid can be honorably given, but will welcome your poor sister here, should your brother refuse to receive her—if he does, however, he will act wrongly ; for, alas ! ’tis not for us too harshly to condemn the fallen, but rather, by every means, try to bring them back to peace ; I am of a hopeful nature, and I will not, as yet, believe these men to have been so sadly led astray—and poor George Radstock, the boy whom we both were wont to regard as a companion and a playmate—he cannot surely have so fallen.”

At the mention of Radstock, the tears fell afresh from Gelica’s eyes, while between her sobs, she exclaimed—

“No, oh, no—I can, indeed, scarcely believe that he is a felon—unless he is sadly altered.”

“It is true, then, Gelica, that you feel deeply for this unfortunate young man—indeed I may say you love him, or have loved him.”

“Love him, I can scarcely answer that question—but I feel far more truly towards him in his sorrow, than I ever imagined I should have done, had he not so fallen. He has, believe me, many good qualities, both of mind and heart; but alas, how mis-directed and mis-applied. But I will now bid you farewell, with much gratitude, for I must write to my poor sister, and hasten her on her way to those who will be ready to receive and soothe her; my brother, harsh at first, has relented, owing to the kind interference of our good Rector; and he is now as eager as he has hitherto been otherwise, to pardon and console.”

“Be it so, but recollect, there is nothing I

will not do within the range of possibility to lighten all your cares."

And having once more embraced, they parted, the one to return to Ashton farm, the other to seek Frederick Passmore.

CHAPTER IX.

From our infancy

We have conversed and spent our hours together.

A gentle tap at his door, apprised the lord of Lindford Hall, as he sat with his head resting on his hand, in deep thought, in reference to the varied occurrences which had that day come to his knowledge, united with still deeper feelings, having reference to his own

happiness, that the knock was made by female hands, and he rose, to admit the supposed intruder ; but how welcome was the sight of her, by whom his every thought, by day and night, was now entirely engrossed.

“ Are you engaged, dear Mr. Passmore, dear Frederick, for so you permit me to call you—if so, I will seek you by-and-bye ; if not give me half an hour now, for I much wish to talk to you who alone can best advise me in a most unhappy business. Poor Miss Winter has been with me here—but your countenance tells me at once, you know all—why not have allowed me to share your annoyance—for annoyance you must feel, to say the least of it—when all in this house are so ready, to take the heaviest portion of any burthen which may harass you.”

“ Well, well, I know it, beloved one, for such you are—and not Miss Coddington—but why knock at that door, which to you has been

ever open, from the time you could scarce reach its handle; I am, indeed, grieved, nay, far more than grieved—for there are many concerned in this unhappy business—whose lives may, henceforth, be nought but care and sorrow. Thanks be to God, however, Miravale assures me that he has long disconnected himself with such rebellious spirits; or the happiness of my poor sister would have been also rudely cast away. But come, I intreat you, darling girl, sit here by my side, in that chair, where my father has so often sat in days long since, with you, sweet one, on his knee, and I will tell you why I went forth this morning early, to visit our dear old friend, the Rector. The birds were singing gaily—the sun was shining brightly, and all nature seemed to share in the gladness of my heart—for I had desired that this day should have been one of the most happy of my life.

“ But I will tell you, dearest Mary, what

was the cause of all this brightness of my heart, ere these sad events occurred, which prevented my naming it to him who has been to me a second father. I was thus intending to address him—My good and Reverend friend, there is a sweet young lady who lives in yonder Hall—in the days of my boyhood, when returning from school, I beheld her sweet young face, and watched its intelligent and speaking expression, it was my pleasure to select her, even then, from among those more nobly born who visited my home, and make her my playmate and companion. This probably arose from the fact, that in boyhood we look with delight on a cheerful infantine face, and the kind and gay of each sex, soon find, that even children cling more fondly to those whose tastes, and associations, unite them more firmly in their youthful pleasures.

“As years passed on, however, the little girl, who had been my companion in search of bird-nests, or in snatching the white water-lilies

from the calm lake, wherein we were wont to sail our boats, became the inmate and cherished friend of my home. I knew that I was born inheritor of the proud rich vales and woodlands we see from these windows, and I also knew, for I mixed with the world, it may be said, at a public school, that this, my young friend and companion, was a labourer's daughter—while I belonged, to what is termed, the aristocrats of this haughty land. Yet, even then, if some worldly pride did for a moment find place in my heart, and my mind, expanded by education, and association, whispered to me—a woman so born, could never approach the grace and intellect of those who have been nursed in a cradle adorned with Brussels' lace—one look from her deep blue eye—one word of her gentle voice convinced me that I erred; nay more, convinced me that a mind and heart belonged to that fair form which would make the possessor fit mate for the proudest in the land.

“Time still passed on, and I returned to my home a man, in years, and thought, and feeling ; that lovely, and loved being had been for a time absent from that home—which now has become her only one—where she was all but idolised. It was in that home, after some years, we met once more. Our hands were again clasped in warm affection, even love—and I looked forward as I did this morning to a season of unmitigated happiness ; but, alas, the hand of death came—as it will sometimes, suddenly, in the hour of night—and ere the morning dawned I stood in this room, the undisputed owner of Lindford Hall ; all this you well remember well, dearest.

“From that time duties, public and private came thick on my time and attention—for even riches, if justly and humbly received, have a thousand calls. Yet I ceased not to direct all my thought, all my duties in such manner, as I hoped and believed would find favour, and gain me esteem from my earliest friend, the

cottage girl—and I would also humbly trust in due submission to my God for his abundant goodness, and the happiness of my numerous tenants, and the public.

“ As time advanced, it was with joy my heart told me, that I was not unsuccessful ; I found that the little girl—with whom I had first danced beneath the spreading walnut tree at Ashton farm—as chosen queen of the revels—now grown to womanhood, in possession of mind, manner, grace, and intellect—to say nothing of personal advantages—loved me as the dearest of brothers ; this, however, did not satisfy me, I longed that she should love me with a far different love ; that without fear of refusal, I might seek her as my wife, for I knew, as I still know, that the joy of my life, or the bitterness of my existence was in her keeping. Well then, from day to day—latterly, even from hour to hour I have yearned to see into the inmost recesses of her heart, that I might

have clearly know that which I was convinced was passing in her mind ; a powerful, yet, unsuccessful attempt to subdue some strong feelings—I wished, beloved friend—to be convinced that those feelings had no reference to any fear of her rejecting me, on the one hand, or fear of her loving another, on the other ; because I knew her well—and I knew nothing would alter her decision, once formed, if formed with reason. And I also knew that she would have sacrificed her own happiness rather than peril in the slightest degree, that of one from whom since her earliest years of childhood, till this hour, she had never received unkindness ; moreover, to do myself justice, I must add, that had my heart been convinced that her love was another's, I think I should have died ere I gave her one pang by any expression of my feeling.

“This it was, that I was about to communicate to my old friend, soliciting his advice,

when I met with that poor unhappy girl from Ashton farm."

Ere Frederick, had ceased speaking, the long fair hair of his companion had touched his cheek, as with her head, sinking on his shoulder, and eyes overflowing with tears, she looked into his face, and said :

" Dear, dear, Frederick, this, indeed is generous, noble, kind, all I have ever thought of you—love you—yes, well you know, I love you, as devotedly, as solemnly, as truly, as undividedly, as ever woman loved man ; has not all, all in this world, led me to love you beyond every other human being ; and who, indeed, have I to love but you—who from my very cradle, I may say, have treated me with the fondest affection. Love another - no—no, indeed, I do not love another, nor ever ever shall ; I speak boldly, perchance you may think, dearest Frederick, that I speak indelicately, unwomanly, in thus truthfully declaring

that I love you, and no living man but you—but when the heart speaks truly, naturally, and sincerely, it needs no fear of being misinterpreted by such as you—'tis only the vulgar and the weak who fear to speak what their souls dictate.

“If I have thus, however, unreservedly, and without hesitation, declared my unalterable attachment and devotion, I equally declare, that unless I am satisfied—having appealed in prayer to God, and placed your wishes before the dear friend you have named, and also had the sanction of your dear, dear sister, and my second mother—never, I say, beloved friend, though my heart break in the trial, will I, the humble cottage girl, bring sorrow on the heart of him who has been to me more than a father or mother.”

“At once, then, beloved girl, cast such thoughts from your mind, now and for ever; those whom you name, would be, indeed, are,

more than earnest in the hope, that my happiness, as all those who know you, will be secured by your being the mistress of Lindford ; therefore, beloved Mary, here, in this room, where my dear father loved to sit among us, before God, who has blessed me through life, I offer you my hand, my heart you have long long held in your safe keeping. I am not known to you only as yesterday ; and I need, therefore, scarcely endeavour to convince you by words, that my whole life shall be passed in the earnest endeavour to contribute to your happiness."

"I know it—I fully know it, dearest Fred, and need I add the joy, you tender to me is great ; but will the world sanction our union with their approval ; if not, may you not live to regret that she, whom you have watched over with such tender care, should be the means of bringing one care on him she loves so fondly."

“ Mary, beloved, the world will learn to love you as you are, and if not, you will be my world—I seek the applause of no other. Because your parents were humble, will they, who have christian hearts, and a real position among the good and true, ever give such a thought; to those who have no such virtues, the wife of him who has twenty thousand a year, will be ever welcome—yet I make this latter remark, rather in derision than aught else, true though it be. And to your husband—as those, and there are many—to whom you are most dear, you will ever remain their own loved Mary, whether you have countless thousands, or live beneath a roof of thatch. So now, my precious girl, let me fold you in my arms, and hear from your own dear lips, that my happiness is complete.”

“ Be it so, then, be it so, and may God give me power, rightly, to appreciate the joy with which my heart is filled.”

At this moment, a carriage with post-horses

drove rapidly to the door, and while Mary flew to her best and fondest friend, Miss Handley, in order that she might pour out the feeling of her joy to one who could so fully share it, Frederick hastened to receive his friend and visitor, Miravale.

CHAPTER IX.

Happy they ! the happiest of their kind !
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend !

HAPPY, indeed, would have been the circle who assembled in the beautiful withdrawing-room, which opened on the terrace of Lindford Hall, that night, had selfish feelings only found place in their hearts ; Frederick, joy-

ous in the knowledge that he loved and was beloved ; with every hope which man on earth could desire—about to be married to the idol of his heart—felt a happiness of spirit difficult to describe, alone subdued by the thought of others care.

Mary, no less than he whom she had long loved with devotion, could scarcely have been more blessed ; yet she also felt, and felt deeply, for the misguided, and those made doubly wretched by their conduct.

Miravale's heart also was glad, for he knew that the sister of his friend could not reproach him, and the affectionate manner of his reception sanctified the belief that he, too, might claim the hand of her he loved as well as his friend Fred.

And Miss Handley, and Eden who still remained an inmate of the Hall, and the aged rector, were all rejoicing in the joy of him they loved, yet grieving for other's woes.

“ Well, Miravale,” observed Frederick, “ that which we have heard is unfortunately too true, then ?”

“ Perfectly so ; this scoundrel, Clarke—selfish from the first, selfish to the last—had no object in life save his own ambition—even in this instance, his object was evidently to push George Radstock into some wild outbreak, as a leader of the mob, while he, taking advantage of the tumult, merely to plunder, would have sneaked away. Luckily he was caught in the very act of urging the destruction of property, and if his neck be saved from the rope, transportation for life is the least he can expect—certainly the least he merits.”

“ I am glad, however, to find that Radstock has not committed himself thus far—his better sense or better nature has saved him ; and the best information I can obtain leads me to hope a year’s imprisonment only will be his fate—this will do him no harm, and we may be enabled, while suffering under the penalties of his follies,

to convince him that an honest and peaceful life of labour tends far more to happiness and wealth, than the vile endeavour to obtain, by illegal and unconstitutional means, a position to which good conduct and exertions alone can and ought to lead mankind. Their trial will take place immediately, and I have given instructions, ere I left London, that the best legal advice should be retained for them, regardless of expense. This is all, with propriety, I could do, till we know the result; when, if they deserve it, I shall go hand-in-hand with you, Fred, in the endeavour to lighten their self wrought sorrows—though, forsooth, are these none the less hard to bear.”

“You do well,” said the kind old clergyman, “and may God see fit to direct their hearts aright.”

On the terrace, where, in childhood, they had so often gambolled, a few days previously to this conversation, walked Frederick Passmore

with his betrothed ; their mutual happiness could only be surpassed by their mutual love ; Fred pressed an early day for calling her his own for ever, before God's altar—while she, with tearful eyes, replied—

“ I ask of you one boon, beloved ; I would await the fate of these unhappy men ; that ended—and I could pray the sentence be not severe—I am yours, God knows how joyfully, yours for ever. But recollect, the man who now stands as an offender of his God's and his country's laws, has eaten with me at the same table, beneath my father's roof. What may be his fate, and what is mine—the one, perhaps, condemned to some harsh punishment for life ; the other about to have every joy on earth fulfilled—yet was he a labourer's son as am I labourer's daughter.”

“ You know, darling, it is ever my first, and it will be my last, desire to obey you—so be it as you wish. But mark you—these are the

effects of employing improper means for attaining a position to which neither the powers of the mind, or the dictates of the heart and conduct are equivalent, and which qualities alone can attain it."

CHAPTER X.

Hark, the wedding bells are ringing.

A MONTH had scarcely elapsed ere the village bells announced a wedding ; great, indeed, were the rejoicings in the happy vale of Lindford. On a bright morning of autumn, the aged rector of Lindford joined together those to

whom his heart clung with the fondness of a parent, Frederick Passmore and Mary Coddington, Miravale and Augusta Passmore ; scarce an eye was dry in the assembled crowd, as the lady of Lindford walked forth among those who had known her as an infant, and loved her as their future mistress ; both old and young, there assembled, she smiled upon all, and shook hands with all who approached her ; for she was about to bid them farewell for a season, while not a heart but prayed for the happiness of her who endeavoured to make all happy.

Frederick, as he handed her into the carriage, turned to his assembled tenants, and thanking them, warmly, for their kindness and good wishes, said—

“I have seen my own country, and I have seen my own home—we go now for a brief season to visit foreign lands ; but only to return and live among you with renewed delight, for England is alone the country of peace,

happiness, and freedom—there is nothing like home.”

George Radstock, the chartist leader, was condemned to a year's imprisonment—this term was reduced to eight months, owing to his conduct when undergoing punishment ; by the kind aid of Frederick Passmore and Miravale, he was then induced to return to his own village, saddened in mind, and a totally altered man, having had practical proof that chartism and physical resistance to the laws of his country could only end in misery. His aged mother lived to see him become a respectable and respected member of society. He married the younger Miss Winter, who was wont often in latter years, to say, when she had a son almost as old as George was when this tale commenced—

“ Ah, dear George, had it not been for my errands and my books, you would never have been a chartist leader, and had you not been

a chartist leader, and got into trouble, my heart would never have taken pity on you, which you know is akin to love."

The widow Clarke lived no long life ; the feeling that she had married a convict caused her to suffer from nervous affection, which, at length, so undermined her health, that she died.

All that kindness and generosity of the most abundant kind could bestow was given, by the sweet Mrs. Passmore, to relieve the moping of mind and body ; but the one was as weak as the other, and the vanity which caused her marriage also caused her demise, for she had no mental recreation to fly to in sadness, no religious fortitude, and therefore could not support the burden with humility and resignation.

Mr. Jacob Clarke is still a convict, may he long remain so, and all who endeavour to destroy the peace and happiness of the land we live in.

THE END.



T H E P R I E S T
AND
T H E Y O U N G D R A G O O N .



THE PRIEST
AND
THE YOUNG DRAGON.

CHAPTER I.

THE following simple tale contains not one word of fiction. For all that, it may convey a distrust in the minds of many a reader from its apparent improbability. Be it so—happy are they, indeed, who, trusting all, have never been deceived—still more happy are they who hav

passed two-score years in this beautiful world, if men would only believe it so, having no tale connected with themselves, or those nearest and dearest to them, or of their own blood, the relation of which, through the means of the printer, would convert in their minds, truth into fiction, and love into hatred. It is happiness to believe such may be the case, or the joys which God has granted to us, even here on earth, might be daily blotted out by the tears of anguish.

I shall relate my tale as a biography, or as the passing events of a few years in the brief life of one I loved and honoured, and whose friendship, commencing in the earliest days of boyhood, remained unshaken till the grave closed over his lamented remains. His name was Templar—at least by such name it is my wish now to recollect him, a descendent from one of the oldest and most respectable aristocratic families of the West. His father, a

distinguished colonel of cavalry, being the younger son and brother of a noble earl, who, having fought with honour in many a glorious battle-field, fell regretted and beloved in the hard fought, and gloriously won, yet bloody victory of Albuera.

Father is a precious name, even when uttered by infant lips—how doubly, trebly so, when the years of manhood find all in that honoured name combined, to be loved as a parent, esteemed as a friend, and honoured as a man—and such a man was Colonel Templar. He had married early—lost a wife on whom his whole heart doted—not, however, before she had borne him two children—a son—the subject of our tale—and a lovely daughter—he only remaining link of those who once formed the happiest of family circles.

Colonel Templar fell wounded unto death, as I have said, on the blood-stained field of Albuera, when gallantly charging at the head of

his regiment into the thick of the enemy. His son was then a mere boy, my friend and comrade at Sandhurst. We studied together and read together, and we shared our joys and sorrows; and thus, even in the earliest days of youth, were not only what the world calls friends, but in reality so.

At the period when Colonel Templar met his glorious death on the battle-field, his son was too young to enter the army, and the property which fell to him, even during his minority, was more than sufficient to have enabled him to have passed through the rough road of life without a profession; but his mind was firmly devoted to that course which his father had so gloriously followed with honour, in spite of the wishes of two high-minded guardians—the one a dignitary of the church and his uncle—the other—a barrister of the Middle Temple.

I must, however, take leave to describe them, giving precedence to the last—though,

forsooth, the church ought, in courtesy, to lead the van. Mr. Romilly—I honour the name—was a perfect gentleman, of admirable humour, and high spirit, who had called himself to the bar, and travelled the western circuit, less with the intention of seeking to practise his profession, than as an agreeable tour; and, in good truth, he played his part to make it so. Although long years have passed, I have his handsome person now before my mind's eye, as does his merry voice still sound in my ears—indeed, never shall I forget the happy days we passed, when my regiment, being quartered at Exeter, he appeared one morning in the barrack square, accompanied by Templar, who, having recently been gazetted to a light cavalry regiment, was on leave previous to joining.

With a dandy wig over his handsome face—his sparkling eyes overflowing with wit and laughter—while his dress, and well polished boots, proved him to be rather a fine gentleman

belonging to a talented profession, than a professional gentleman seeking fortune from his talents. His briefs—though his abilities were equal in all justice to his clients, had he sought them—consisted in drawing caricatures of the jury, or the public in the court; while his pleasant conversation, sparkling wit, good humour, and melodious voice, made the dulllest of dinner tables agreeable.

At the period of which I speak, he could scarcely have attained forty years of age. Such was one of Templar's guardians. On this occasion, he entered the barrack square arm and arm with his ward, who for the first time, was about to join his regiment in Ireland; while I, divided from my friend, solely because I was less favored by fortune, had some short time previously, joined an Infantry Regiment—one nevertheless that was unsurpassed for its gallant deeds in war, as for its high discipline at home. In fact, it was termed a crack regiment,

and well it might have been, for a more high-spirited and gentlemanly set of young officers never sat round a mess table, or rode to meet the hounds.

“I will tell you what it is Captain,” said the barrister, accosting me cordially—I had only joined a month previous—“My young ward, cornet Templar and your humble servant—permit me, however, to introduce him”—We were then warmly shaking one another’s hands—“My young friend cornet Templar, and I, have been told that the ’——th, boast of one of the Oude family as their gastronomic artist. Moreover, that your brethren in arms are a jovial corps—ergo—as I have much attachment for the chivalry of ancient days, and knowing the hospitality of the army—why, should you suggest the honor of our company at the mess at seven to the moment—we have determined on accepting your invitation.”

It is scarcely necessary to add that the invi-

tation was as heartily given, as heartily accepted; and never shall I forget the joyous evening we passed. The table was kept in a roar by the barrister's brilliant sallies, and the night was far spent, ere his melodious voice ceased to fill the mess-room with its echoes.

This was one of Charlie Templar's guardians. The other, I have already stated, was a dignitary of the church, and his uncle. To them he expressed an anxious desire to enter the army, and well their sentiments on the subject coincided with their different characters. Permit them, however, to speak for themselves.

"I will tell you what it is, my dear Charlie," said the barrister. "The army is no go for a lad of your parts and fortune—without you can get on the right side of the chieftan, and manage the Blues or the Life Guards; and what then, forsooth? Why, you pass your life either on the back of a black charger, escorting her Majesty to the Parliament House, or the

railway station, or looking out at the guard-room window at the horse guards, counting the pink and yellow bonnets which pass Whitehall, for six or eight shilling a day, which you require not from the public. And as for your going into the Infantry, to be broiled alive in India, or frozen to death in America—neither your uncle nor I could possibly advance the money for such a speculation—it is not to be dreamt of, my dear boy, *pon honour!* And as for fighting, charging, slashing and cutting, whether your enemies be Sikhs, Chinese, or more civilized Frenchmen—it is quite out of fashion. And as to gaining decorations and stars, and such things—who's a jot the wiser if you do? You lock them up in a drawer till you die, and your heir sells them to the pawnbroker. Believe me, military enthusiasm is a thing defunct, vulgar and obsolete, till another Bonaparte threatens to invade us, and then it will be time to think of the army. Moreover,

should another battle of Waterloo be fought, you would decidedly get knocked on the head, smashed, killed as dead as a herring—men of fortune always are, and good fellows are a positive mark for the enemy's riflemen. Take my advice, eat yourself peaceably to the bar—it is an honourable and gentlemanlike profession—if so be, you must have one, join us—go the western circuit; laugh, talk, and make merry, as I do. Spend your money at home, help to hang the rogues, and save the innocent—though, forsooth, the wrong man may have, perchance, sometimes to swing for the benefit of his neighbour. Think no more of the red coat. The girls are equally attracted by four thousand a year.”

His reverend uncle next came to the charge on the other flank, and suggested the church. He had fat livings to bestow, and he desired to retain them in the family. Men of fortune in the church were few. The Tractarian spirit

was gaining ground, and the church wanted good recruits. Why not enter the church? and a good rectory should be held in abeyance. As for war and warriors—he scarcely considered them christians. War was hateful and irreligious—he appeared to forget the bitter war of religious controversy, and that none fought so bitterly as your self-elected christians, who would flay alive all who disagreed with them—war was hateful, and he could not reconcile it with his conscience to aid in obtaining a commission for the son of his brother, and his ward.

Notwithstanding, however, alike the objections of barrister and bishop, both law and church were ultimately conquered, and the wishes, if not the determination, of Templar, were carried out, and he entered that honorable profession in which his father had been so distinguished. In fact he had barely attained his seventeenth year, ere he was gazetted to a light

cavalry regiment, then serving in Ireland. Previous, however, to his departure to join his corps, he paid me a visit to Exeter, accompanied, as I have already said, by Romilly.

Our meeting was a cordial and happy one. Both enthusiastic as regards the profession we had chosen, we entered fully into the spirit of his guardian's cheerful character, and never was a more joyous evening than that we passed at Templar's first mess dinner. Many the good humoured jokes, many the hilarious laugh and merry song which echoed through the apartment as we sat around a well replenished board, on that ever-to-be-remembered evening of August, 18— on the termination of which, my friends were to leave for Ireland.

The early morrow, however, was at hand, ere we bid adieu to the pleasant society and convivial board of my much esteemed brother officers, and the day was far advanced ere they started for Plymouth, from whence, having

taken leave of Romilly, Templar went on board the steamer which conveyed him to Cork.

The first intimation of his arrival in Ireland, was announced to me by a brief, laconic letter ; which ran thus :—

“ DEAR ———

“ I am here safe and sound in the Emerald Isle. Will you believe it ? imagination—that is, my fevered imagination, had led me to fancy I was banished to a barren land, inhabited by a savage race ; instead of which I find myself located in a beautiful city, surrounded by a lovely and luxuriant country, the inhabitants of which are kind, hospitable, and courteous to a fault. In fact, were it not an occasional effusion arising from a national mixture of peat smoke and whiskey punch,

which, is not particularly agreeable to the nasal organs of a Saxon (that is recollect—the peat not the punch)—I should soon forget I was in Old Ireland, and order my horse to ride over to your still more beautiful City of fair Devon, to pass, if only one more night, such as that joyous evening on which we parted.

“ You are, doubtless, anxious for my opinion of the gallant —th. All I can tell you at present is, that it is admirably mounted, and I like much what I have seen of my brother officers. Blackmore carries me to perfection.

“ Ever yours,

“ CHARLES.”

I heard no more of my friend for months, and at length wrote in some anxiety, to know the cause of his silence ; but the next letter in-

formed me that he had been sent to a distant detachment with a party of his regiment in a remote district ; and he thus wrote :—

“ You have doubtless heard that the “kingdom” of Cannaught is one of the fairest portions of the united realms of Her Majesty, and if so, you have heard correctly. There are spots that no lover of nature can look on without admiration. Wild hills and luxuriant woodlands. Here, indeed, God has done all for man, where man does nothing for himself. Fancy my station, with twenty troopers as companions, in a wild Irish village, surrounded on all sides by the most beautiful scenery. A sparkling trout stream as clear as crystal rushes over rocks and pebbles, through the very garden on which my window looks. Beyond it are woodland slopes and heathered hills, from which I am enlivened by the chirps

of grouse and the hum of the black-cock. What then? That which in dear old England would be a village of sweet Auburn, with cottages embosomed in roses and honeysuckles, situated in a valley of sweet waters—in fact the spot of spots for a rustic hamlet, of which you have so many in Devon and Somerset, is the veriest pigsty of a residence for human beings, enlivened solely by the natural beauties with which it is encircled. Inhabited literally by a half savage race, and sharing the joys of life with the pigs, which have more than their share of that accommodation which ought to be appropriated to man. And here am I, picturing you in imagination, looking from your windows on the valley of the Exe—a pleasant re-union at the Queen of Cities—a run down to Exmouth, and a plunge into the glorious ocean, or a yachting party to Babbi-combe Bay—while I, with two rooms, twenty men-at-arms, Blackmore and the White Knight

in my stable, and my noble hound Glenmore at my feet, a few books, and you will add, not a soul to speak to or associate with, and must consequently be dying of ennui and disgust in this—God preserve the people!—most beautiful wilderness of peat and pigs. But no—you would judge my position incorrectly—I have society, and that not only of the most agreeable but of the most intellectual character. I will endeavour to describe it. In the first place, I have struck up a friendship with the village priest; his name is Father Clement. Whether he be a father or not, however, it is not for me to say. All I can add, is, that few women, I should imagine, but would admire him. From this you will at once understand that the picture you have possibly painted in your mind's eye of this said Roman absolver of peccadillos, is quite wrong, for well I know, you heretofore thought, as have I, that all those servants of the Pope are fat, vulgar, uneducated, and florid

human beings, somewhat leaning to rotundity of abdomen, and tipped with vermilion at the terminus of their nasal organs; without mind, manners, or refinement—in fact, without one idea beyond the abstinence of a fast day, or one thought, save the omnipotence of their lord and master, His Holiness the Pope.

“But you are wrong, utterly at fault, at least as regards my friend, he is the adverse of all I have stated. Why, then, you will naturally ask, is he buried alive here? though true the scenery is lovely. As yet I cannot explain, for it is a mystery I have not unravelled, save it be to tame the rude, yet generous people, and apparently half savages, by which he is surrounded. He called on me doubtless out of a feeling of compassion for my lonely situation, or kind feelings of courtesy, knowing me to be the officer in command of Her Majesty’s forces in Connaught—a glorious command, is it not? When he entered my room I was comfortably

reclining in my portable easy chair, enjoying a meershaum of Dutch cut, and the perusal of the last number of the *Sporting Magazine*, which I manage to receive about the middle of each month—better late than never—At first, that is to say, ere I had examined his features, I was rather inclined to treat his visit as an intrusion, as I confess my abomination of aught bordering on the Jesuitical ; but truth compells me to admit, ere he had conversed for half an hour, I forgot the priest, and thought solely of the man who sat before me. I will, however, in the first place, endeavour to give you a brief sketch of his personal appearance. Picture to yourself, a slight, but remarkably well-formed man, standing about five feet ten, with dark, but closely cut yet curly hair ; eyes searching and brilliant as those of an eagle, and as blue as those distant mountains, behind which was sinking a glorious sun, while his mouth contained a well-formed set of teeth, as white as

alabaster ; and from which, when he spoke, there came a smile like that from the mouth of a beautiful infant, or still more beautiful woman. Never has it been my lot to meet with human being so attractive in person, mind, or manners, as Father Clement appeared to me to be, though his age could scarcely have exceeded six and thirty years. Graceful in person, graceful in manner, I could not but think he was far more fitted for a chaplain of the Vatican, or a fashionable Cardinal or Abbè, such as I had read of, than a parish priest in the wilds of Connaught. But I intend to know more of his reverence, for he pleases me vastly—that is, his first *mise en scene*.

“ But for to-day, I must bid you adieu, for he tells me the waters are alive with fish, and you know my love for the sport.

“ I like my regiment much.

“ Yours ever,

“ CHARLIE TEMPLAR.”

To continue this tale in its truthfulness, I find for the present, that a mere succession of Templar's letters, or extracts therefrom, will far better explain his feelings and proceedings during his stay, as he termed it, in his Connaught command, than were I to create a tale from these faithful records of days lang syne.

My own corps had recently been removed to Plymouth, from whence, it was reported, we were shortly to sail for Malta, and I therefore wrote to Templar, urgently requesting him, if possible, to obtain a week's leave of absence ere I sailed, and pass it with me; adding, that although I could give him no hope of meeting the bishop, I felt assured that Romilly would join us.

"You are fortunate," he replied, "to have marched from the Exe to the shores of the bright and ever changing ocean. Though for-

sooth, Exeter is a very agreeable city, and the girls of Devonian are charming. No dear—I cannot, however I might wish it, come to you just now. Moreover, I hear your regiment will not embark for months to come—at least, so says — of the Horse Guards, to whom I wrote a private letter. Had it been otherwise, I would have made an effort, for I could not endure your leaving England without our meeting again. But go, you will not, I am assured, at present, and if you do, I promise, and that faithfully, to build a yacht which will beat the America, and cruise to the Mediterranean.

“You know my passion for the sea, and while on the one hand I shall be in the fashion, on the other, I shall have the pleasure of meeting again as fine a set of fellows as ever sat around a mess table.

“But I promised to give you a detailed account of all my proceedings here, and I will

do so faithfully. They are already sufficiently strange to form the foundation of a romance. Father Clement, I see daily, and the more I see of him the more, I confess, I feel the charm of his society and conversation. He has not as yet attempted to convert me—perhaps I am scarcely worth converting, and although ready to be absolved, I am not prepared to confess. So far I am perfectly safe, and yet I find myself continually asking the question—‘Why is such a man in such a place?’ Object there must be, and of no common order, that is certain—he is no ordinary parish priest—no ordinary man. Were he to preach in the market-place, the women would give more were he to hand round his hat and ask for half-pence merely to look at his hands and face, and hear his flute-like voice, than fifty times the stipend he enjoys at such a place as this, without he has permission to draw on the Bank of the Vatican, which from his style of living, I fancy

must be the case. But you must pardon me, if, for the moment, I bid adieu to Father Clement, and introduce some other visitors.

“Picture to yourself, if within the range of a civilized English imagination, my habitation in this swinish village of one of the most beautiful countries in the world—moreover, a country inhabited by some of the noblest and truest hearts, overflowing with generosity, charity, kindly and neighbourly feelings. The pride of our aristocracy, many of them Irish, fly yearly to the most detestable out-of-the-way, peat-smelling holes in Scotland—are surrounded by a people who have no feelings in common save their love of money, which sentiment they possess to their inmost heart’s core—to shoot grouse, catch salmon, eat marmalade, and drink whiskey, which they drink and profess to like, though many hold it in detestation.

“Returning to England, they declare the Highlands to be a paradise, nine twelfths of them not being able to explain which portion of Her Majesty’s Northern dominions are really the Highlands ; while all the world—that is the travelling world and the reading world, know full well, save as regards the west, Scotland is treeless and bleak, while parts of Ireland, offering the most beautiful scenery and richest of spots are neglected, unvisited and unsought, from the very erroneous opinion and impression that the people are little better than murderers, or the country little else than a waste.

“Come here and judge for yourself. Would that hundreds, nay thousands, would do so, and one of the finest countries in the world would raise its head far higher than has ever that of the mountain and the flood ; and then perchance the close association with the better class of English protestants, might, in

a measure, counteract even polished Jesuitism.

“I was speaking, however, of my quarters, forming two small rooms, ill-furnished, with walls unpapered, the one my sitting-room, in which a peat fire smokes eternally when the weather is cold—no delightful poking—no welcome blaze—my bed-room without a fire-place all.

“Both rooms look on a luxuriant, but neglected garden. This garden is watered by a sparkling trout stream, beyond lies a rich valley, and in the distance mountains and woodlands which delight me to behold, though I gaze on them literally for hours.

“You wish me to give you a detail of all, therefore I will add that my furniture is scanty, a carpet, a most comfortable portable easy chair, and a sofa, these belong to your humble servant, together with sundry books, and a few trifling elegances and

conveniences of life, which make my room look habitable, if not cosy.

“Nevertheless, my apartment is not precisely such in which I should desire to receive ladies fair, or lords of high degree. Moreover, it smelleth a trifle, if you must know the truth, of that weed, which thanks to the noble Sir Walter—not he of Queen Victoria, but he of Queen Elizabeth—enables the gallant officers of the Crown land forces to pass many a pleasant hour in mental ruminations which otherwise might be passed in wishing it was dinner time.

“I had yesterday fortunately attired myself decently, intending to parade my score of gallant troopers for an afternoon muster—when a sort of open carriage, by no means an elegant one, drove up to this, my present home. I looked from my window and beheld stepping therefrom an elderly gentleman, and one of the fairest of Eve’s daughters.

“But I must close this long epistle to-day, for I have an engagement; my next will tell you a strange tale.

“Yours,

“C. TEMPLAR.”

I began, I must confess, to feel a sort of all-overishness as regarded my friend Templar's position in Irish society. The handsome priest—forerunner of evil. Eve's daughter—the forecloser. Indeed my regard for him was so truly unselfish and real; moreover, from his being somewhat younger than myself, mixed with so much of the feelings of an elder brother, that I confess I wished the Jesuit—for such I was convinced was the character of his handsome visitor—buried in the bogs of Con-

nemara, or drowned in one of the numerous salmon pools.

Much as I feared the priest, however, I feared the petticoat more—for against the one the back may be turned. But heaven help the youth or man, who succumbs to the power of the other.

As I strolled one morning along the parapet which overhangs the harbour of Plymouth, viewing the distant ships, the glorious ocean, the breakwater, and sundry other delights offered to him who sojourns there in summer time, enjoying a first-rate Havannah—almost as rare a prize as the Koh-i-noor—when chance or the sunshine, or the mild air, or the prospect, or what not, brought me face to face with one of the best of men it was ever my good fortune to know, and my better fortune to call friend. This friend gloried in the rank of Captain of the Royal Navy, and had still greater reason for rejoicing in the fact of his being one of the

truest of Christians, and most agreeable of companions.

"I am rejoiced to see you, gallant Captain," I exclaimed, as we met face to face, both taking our cigars from our mouths—for a little enjoyment in the way of an Havannah was not then considered unchristian, though for aught I know to the contrary, it may become so; suffice that my friend Captain Topsail, of the Griffin frigate, then in harbour, was an upright, downright, true, warm-hearted and excellent officer, moreover, a well-bred gentleman.

We turned together and smoked on puff for puff.

"Do you recollect, Captain," said I, "dining at our mess in Exeter, when passing through not many months since—I believe you came to visit Loftus of ours—that you met there a most agreeable gentleman—a barrister—and a young friend of mine just gazetted to a

Light Dragoon regiment on his way to join in Ireland."

"Most assuredly do I—but what of him? He appeared in all respects a most amiable and thorough gentleman, well fitted to do honor to the profession he had chosen."

"And you judge rightly, Captain, so far—but I would tell you more—for I honor your opinion. Scarcely had he passed through the ordeal consequent on joining—the riding-school drills and so forth—ere he was sent to an out quarter—a strange place—apparently for one so young and little accustomed as he is to the ways of the world. Nevertheless, he appears well pleased with his *locale*—if so I may judge from his correspondence; but, there is a species of romance attached to his proceedings, as well as to his society, which at the moment I can scarcely unravel. And now comes the point which most weighs on my mind, solely that I hold him in much regard, and know him to be

weak in purpose when the heart is touched. I shall tell you then, without further preamble, that his most intimate acquaintance is a handsome and talented Roman Catholic priest, and from all I can as yet ascertain, the hook of this wolf in sheep's clothing is baited with one of the fairest of Eve's daughters—more, I cannot say, till I hear further. But what think you of such a position as this for a mere boy, not yet of age, and who, moreover, possesses no common personal attractions, mental qualities, and—on his attaining his majority—that which would be considered by most men a handsome inheritance ?”

“Think ! Why I think by the ship I command—by the Goddess of War and of Fame—that he stands a fair chance of being outwitted ; the more so, as you say, that he is weak in purpose, and likely to strike his colours to a petticoat. But tell me, who is this priest, and who the lady ?”

“Of them I know little or nothing, save what he tells me in his letters. Here they are, have you time for their perusal?”

“Undoubtedly, my young friend, I really begin to feel interested in the matter.”

And so saying, we seated ourselves on a gun carriage, and while he read, I smoked and ruminated.

“Decidedly romantic, my young officer,” he at length exclaimed, returning the letters, and puffing out a most astonishing puff. “Decidedly romantic, and on the verge of danger at the moment. However, I cannot see my way clear, nor yours either. You must write and ask for more particulars, at all events, get another letter from the youth located amid the beauties of Connaught. When that arrives, come to me ; I feel deeply, as deeply interested in this lad as you appear to be, and I will lend you a hand in time, to send a broadside into the priest, courtesy forbids my yet condemn-

ing the lady. In the meantime, let me tell you, I have a few friends to dinner on board the Griffin, will you join us? If so, I will send a boat for you."

I accepted his kind invitation, and we parted.

The party was most agreeable and jovial, as such parties were wont to be on board Her Majesty's frigates, when hospitality was the order of the day, combined with high-bred and gentlemanly feeling, and evidence of a bright morning was already gilding the Eastern sky, ere I found myself once more on *terra firma*, and thence quietly proceeded to my quarters and to bed.

On rising, somewhat later than was my custom, two letters lay on the breakfast table, one of which I instantly discovered to be from Templar—and I quickly broke the seal, it ran thus :—

“DEAR —

“The rain falls heavily, the thunder growls and roars; all nature appears at war. This is not disagreeable, for my heart is somewhat in unison with the weather, if not positively sad—and yet I cannot say that I am exactly sad; but I do not see my way clearly in this abode of peat, pigs, priests, and mystifications. My fire smokes abominably, even my pipe does not smoke with its usual excitement and aroma, and I can do nothing but think of the past and the present. The past, as far as it goes, is pleasant enough, so is the present, barring the rain and the thunder, a smoking fire, and the want of some one to whom I can “unbusso” myself, as old Mrs. Galton was wont to say—do you recollect her?

“So I have taken up my pen, and a vile one

it is, and I am no hand at mending, to say my say to you, old camarado. I scarcely recollect how my last epistle ended ; but I fancy it was to announce an arrival, and such an arrival here, amid the wilds of the Emerald Isle, where my good mother's abigail was wont to tell me all was contrariety, and forsooth she was not far wrong.

“ I have already endeavoured, as clearly as my artistic talents enabled me, to draw you a faithful picture of my domicile. Place it before your mind ; if so be you can form any rough sketch, and place your illustrious friend Charlie in the foreground, with his back to the peat-fire, causing it to smoke, and smell somewhat more than ordinarily. But wait a moment ! I have not laid down my first parallel, or mentioned my approaches, that is, the staircase leading to my one and only chamber of reception. Be it known to you then, that a lusty person could scarcely obtain the ascent, without

fear of sticking by the way; and as for the door, it is a thing impossible, and never contemplated by the architect who built my rural abode. Nevertheless, the carriage stopped at my portal—and knockers are here things unknown—and having looked forth from my window, and discovered a black hat and a pink bonnet, I turned myself once more to the protection of the peat, and nervously, I may add, mixed with curiosity and anxiety, awaited the result. The sequel may be thus explained :

“ ‘Mister Jeames !’ this in a screeching voice
‘Mister Jeames !’

“ ‘I’m coming, woman.’

“ ‘Woman, he calls me—the varmint Englisher. Mister Jeames, I say, is his honour the captain within and at home? By St. Patrick ! there’s no knowing the ways of you English slaves.’

“ ‘Woman, be aisy—that’s what you Irish term for silence, han’t it? And if master is at home, what’s in the wind?’

“ ‘A she again, by the pigs—the hiretic, a she— What’s in the wind!—the sow. Why, his honour, the master of Castle Harrisfort, and Miss Cathline O’Gwynne has called, and wishes a sight of his honour’s pretty face.’

“ ‘Then Miss Cathline shall have it, and no mistake,’ said my trusty Jeames. ‘For the devil a one have I seen myself since Master Charlie came here, or aught in the shape of a woman, save it be Peggy O’Meara, with her bare feet, driving the cows to milk, or little Mary Mc’Guire a feeding of the pigs—little Mary’s a favourite lassie of mine, as well as the master’s. But I say, Mrs. —, where is these big folks as is come a visiting?’

“ ‘When I tell you that all this lively conversation was perfectly audible to me in my drawing-room, and my glory, you may well fancy the amusement it afforded to my visitors. I could stand it no longer, so, opening the door, I exclaimed—

“‘James, go instantly to the door, express my regret that my visitors should be kept waiting, and show them up at once.’

“In the meantime, I own that my thoughts and imaginations were at fault. I fancied I was about to be presented to a wild Irish girl, with a wilder papa, who had come, out of curiosity, to peep into the domestic discomforts of a young English officer, and amuse themselves with my utter disgust and total weariness of the nature of my imprisonment. Indeed, at the moment, I utterly forgot Father Clement, or the possibility that to him I was indebted for an act of courtesy, kindness, and hospitality, and more, I am free to confess, that my very cheeks burn with shame, now that I remember having so misjudged those whose kindness, liberality, and simple generosity, I have rarely seen equalled, never surpassed.

“I stood, as I have said, with my back to

the peat-fire, alike in summer as in winter, a friend in need, when the door opened, and James, as he could be, and ought to have been, for he had lived some years in my family, in the most aristocratic manner, announced—

“ ‘ Sir John O’Gwynne, and Miss O’Gwynne, of Castle Harrisfort.’

“ I was about to bow, and express my regret that my poor habitation was such as to enable me to offer but little accommodation, more to express my regret that the rude language I had heard, could not escape their hearing, when, as the sailors say, I was taken all aback.

By St. Hubert, the saint we both swear by, what an old gentleman, and what a beautiful young girl. London, in the height of the season, from the most choice of its society, could not have produced a finer specimen of the former, nor more lovely picture, to my taste, than the latter.

Time, he gave me none to apologise; but coming forward with outstretched hand, and beaming countenance, he exclaimed—

“By the powers! my young friend, well may you term us savages, or Romans, or aught else, while we give you so much reason to judge us harshly. Here am I, living in a large castle hard-by, that is, only three Irish leagues hence, with spare bed-rooms sufficient to hold a regiment of horse, a cellar well stocked with claret, stables containing half a dozen weight-carrying hunters, a grouse moor, to say nothing of splendid rivers; and this, my Cathline mavournen, with eyes and a voice like a nightingale, and yet I have left you to revel among pigs and peasants, without one offer of hospitality, or even a call.” Here he took breath. “By dad, it’s a lucky thing that Father Clement told me you were here, or, may be, you would have returned to England, or on the staff of the lord lieutenant, where all the good-looking

scions of the aristocracy do go, and have sworn that these savages, the Catholics, were neither gifted with the virtue of hospitality, or aught else becoming to christians and gentlemen. Let me, therefore, assure you, without further preface, that we shall be delighted to see you at Castle Harrisfort as soon as it may please you, and as often, and as for as long a period as it may please you to remain. If you are a sportsman, you can hunt and shoot to your heart's content ; if not, my daughter here, permit me to introduce her, will shew you some of the finest scenery in the north, and, moreover, I have a library, which, methinks, will take some time to read through."

Having been introduced to Miss O'Gwynne, Cathline by name, not as yet married, I shall endeavour to introduce her to you, best of friends. The pleasure will, nevertheless, be a matter of some difficulty to one so little gifted with imagination as I am, still

more so, perhaps, that I have to paint a picture in reality so beautiful, that no sketch, even of that imagination in which I have declared myself wanting, could sketch in life-like reality. However, I must do my best, leaving it for you to fill up the faulty portions of my picture, washing the whole with bright tints and warm touches, and thus save it from entire failure.

Recollect my position, the people by whom I was surrounded, and above all, the sort of apartment in which I had received my visitors. Recollect also, my nervousness, and the total disbelief that any one existed nearer to me than the City of Dublin, with half the good breeding and courtesy evinced by the apparently amiable Irish baronet, who had thus broken in on my solitude; who, notwithstanding his brogue, is a thorough specimen of his order, high-bred, hospitable, and kind-hearted.

True also, my dress was not unbecoming, if not such as it would have been, had I expected a visit from a lady so fair, and a gentleman of such importance. Behold me then, as I stood on my own hearth, for I desire to be concise; my nether garments were certainly unexceptionable, the well-fitting boot, the bright spur, and the blue trowsers, with the broad gold lace. But my upper man had no such distinguishing ornaments, a black shooting jacket, in fact, completed my costume. Moreover, the adornments of my apartment were not precisely such as to attract the beautiful eyes which appeared to gaze on the walls, and rest on the beautiful pictures which surrounded them.

And well they might, but you are tolerably *au fait*, do I use the Gallic term aright? of the possible embellishments of a cornet's quarters, wheresoever they may chance to be. If not, permit me to add for your information, as for

the curious, in such matters, that above my chimney-piece, appears the portrait of a fair *danseuse*, then highest in the public adoration, in the attire which had most attracted the pit audience, to say little of the gentlemen “installed ;” in fact, she appeared in the very act of performing a favourite pirouette, and consequently exposed, to some hundreds of admiring eyes, the prettiest leg and foot in the world, save that of Miss O’Gwynne, I mean, of course, the foot—ah no, fancy alone, not I, can describe that.

This celebrated portrait was flanked by portraits of my beloved parents, both of these most beautiful and highly finished ; Napoleon on his white charger crossing the Alps also figured conspicuously on my whitewashed walls, side by side with the Duke and his telescope at Waterloo ; and sundry other strange prints, or rather coloured pictures, of a sporting nature, generally speaking, such as might be termed disasters of the science of hunting.

On my tables here and there were scattered sundry books, fit associates to my pictures, and one or two meershaums, a box of cigars, and a large bible, which I greatly valued, might be said to be the adornments of an apartment, which in good faith, wanted some little gilding to make it habitable even for a cornet; how much more so, thought I, for the fair creature who then adorned it.

Courtesy and hospitality combined, made me think that, after a long drive over the mountains, luncheon would not be unacceptable to my guests; and so utterly confounded was I at the moment, that I was well nigh pulling the bell, and immediately ordering the same—forgetting that no mess-waiter was at hand, and that I was no longer in the halls of my fathers'—when the fact of there being no bell, came to my aid, and with it, the recollection that I had dined off trout, and a tough foul the day previous, the legs of which had appeared grilled that morning for breakfast. I

had, therefore, no alternative but that of silence on the subject of gastronomy.

But to come to the main point, or rather to the young lady, for you must be already tolerably weary of description. How shall I name her, or sketch her, with this abominable goose quill? Let me try. Premising that I had induced the amiable papa, for amiable must be the father of such a daughter, if so be he had not addressed me with such frank and entire absence of all hypocrisy, to take possession of my portable chair, and then induced her lovely self to be seated on my portable sofa.

She was fair, dear F., yes, fair in the truest acceptation of the term, and you well know I have ever preferred fairness in women, though you were wont to talk of dark and flashing eyes, gipsy orbs, Spanish Senoretas, and so forth. However, taste is taste, in the matter of women, as well as in all other things in life. So I tell you Miss Cathline O'Gwynne

is fair. In fact, her hair is fair, her skin is fair, but her hair curls beautifully ; there was no attempt at a madonna plasteration. While I think of it, do you not agree with me, that the fashion, which now pervades the whole female sex, from the nursery girl to the shop girl, the shop girl to the young ladies who gratify the hungry public taste for pork pies at railway stations—at a very considerable outlay—and so on to the highest step in the ladder of female society, commit a positive sin in the plasteration of their hair, instead of allowing it to curl as nature intended. This is a vile custom, beneficial alone for vendors of pomatum, and so called bear's grease.

But I said Miss Cathline is fair, and truly is she, with large laughing blue eyes, a beautiful mouth, teeth as white as the paper I write on, and a nose and ear, oh, such a nose and ear, that I could scarcely refrain from pulling both the one and the other, to see if they were

real. I now come to her figure. Tall, she is not, I felt, I know not why, glad of this, for I do not particularly admire tall woman, though our old friend, Harry Fairfax, was an exception to tall women, neither was she very short. Of this I was still more glad, for short women are generally over parsimonious, often bad tempered, and given to argue, No Cathline, Miss Cathline, I mean, is exactly the height of the Venus de Medicis, neither too short nor too tall, too fat or too thin. She might possibly have been fattened up a little with ease, or reduced a little by tenderness; and mark you, it is well to look to the points of women as well as horses, for men as women, are, in their creation, either devils or angels, say nay who will. I have so far got to the form divine; the foot I have already named, a decided beauty in women. She wore what are termed double soled boots, but double or single, such a foot! and that in the wilds of Ireland. You don't believe me,

well, you don't, that's all. And her ankle, why I looked at the *danseuse* over the mantel-piece, and I thought of Harry Fairfax, our old beauty, and taking the one and the other, I fancied and then felt convinced she was a fit model for a sculptor.

But enough of this. Beautiful as she is, almost perfect in my opinion, her manners are no less graceful, natural, and pleasing; and when the thoroughly straightforward old gentleman, her father, having taken me by the hand, and shaking it warmly, said :—

“ Now, young gentleman, let us become good friends, and neighbours—Come to the castle when you will, and remain as long as you like, bring your horses and your servant—at all events, to commence, we shall expect you to dine and sleep to-morrow—” when this kind invitation was followed up by the fair daughter in terms equally pressing, adding that she considered herself mistress of Castle Har-

risfort, having no mother, and was, therefore, bound in courtesy to second her father's wishes.

I did that which you would have done, and all other young men in the army, I cordially accepted an invitation, kindly and warmly given, and went. But the clouds are clearing away, and the thunder has rolled over the mountains, the sun is peeping out, and I have a word to say to father Clement—his residence is more than a mile hence—so you must await an account of my doings and sayings at the castle till my next."

Having read this long letter with much care and attention, and formed the only reasonable opinion that could be formed on the subject, that Templar would soon be violently in love with the fair daughter of the baronet, and that such was the desire of father Clement, for reasons yet unknown, I quietly put it in my pocket, and then proceeded to the public reading room, where I concluded, as usual, I should

find my friend Topsail, spelling as was his custom, the advertisements in the *Times*. And sure enough there he was, excellent and amiable man, spectacles on nose, if not precisely arrived at the advertisements, deep in the leaders.

“How are you, lad? how are you?” he goodnaturedly exclaimed. “None the worse for the festivities I hope?”

“No.”

“Well, that’s all right. But you do not drink deep. Clarke of ours, my first that is, complains of a fearful headache. I left him on board drinking brandy and soda water, nothing like a hair from the tail of the dog that bit you. But what’s the matter? You are rather gloomy this morning, which is not usual; what’s the matter?”

“Why, this letter,” I replied, pulling Templar’s epistle from my pocket.

“So soon? Well, the boy appears to be

going fast, let me read it," with this he laid down the paper, placed his glasses more firmly on his nose, and read it calmly every word of it, then handing it to me, he added, "look ye captain, I know little or nothing about love affairs. Moreover, I take it Templar's right reverend uncle, and guardian, is no match for a Jesuit priest, such as father Clement appears to be. A barrister, however, and a man of the world, such as I fancy Romilly to be, is not so readily gulled. Take my advice, write him a line, and in confidence, and enclose him young Templar's correspondence, and await the result. In the mean time, write to Connaught, and say in easy terms that you are rejoiced to find that Irish out-quarters can offer such agreeable society as baronets with castles, and lovely daughters; to say nothing of handsome priests. Then urge his coming to the regatta, he is fond of yachting I heard you say?"

Now I have endeavoured through life, to

abstain from asking any man's opinion on any subject, that I do not intend to take. Moreover, I had most perfect confidence in my friend. I therefore did precisely as he had suggested, and wrote alike to Romilly, as to Ireland. A few posts brought a reply from the former; a week scarce elapsed, ere I had another long letter from Connaught. I shall give these letters in full, and my task will be well nigh concluded.

"Captain of light bobs;" said Romilly, "the light might be converted into good French, the bobs is beyond me, a priest of ton, you say, and a lady fair, and Charlie⁴ in their net. Poor lad! he has about as much chance of escaping, as a salmon well hooked, who having done his best for an hour with a stream in his favour, finds himself in a net handled by a skilful piscator. There is nothing to be done but to remove him from the scene of his bewilderment. Our illustrious commander-in-chief

loved the boy's father, who was a gallant soldier and man after his own heart. I have, in company with the Right Reverend Uncle, in the silk apron, been at the Horse Guards this morning. I have not heard whether the good prelate promised a fat living or a stall to the chief secretary's brother, or to whom. All I know is, that I promised B., should have all my influence at Swanstown. And it comes to this, cornet Templar, of the light dragoons, will appear in a gazette or two, as promoted to a lieutenancy in the second Life Guards, vice, the Earl Smitherens, promoted.

"But mark you, dear F., it is impossible to lose a good thing in these days, when to be merry is to be bad, and a laugh is all but criminal, so I must tell you the joke in private."

"I called on the dignitary, and offered to read Templar's letters, somewhat a breach of confidence, was it not? but all's fair in love and war; he listened attentively almost with

interest, till I came to the description of the young lady ; he then wriggled about somewhat uneasily in his chair, as if the remembrance of some early peccadillos touched his right reverend conscience. The light hair and the blue eyes however, passed muster, but when I came to pretty ankles and round legs, on which of course, I commented with considerable pathos, as practible evidence of the Priest's intentions, for I see he has a claim on our friend Charlie for some good reason or another, as yet unknown to us ; by Saint Hubert ! his uneasiness became positive fidgets, and he arose and said, ' that will do Romilly, that will do. I have heard enough ; my brother's boy must be removed.' This having been decided, we drove down to the Horse Guards on the following day, in his lordship's carriage ; and the result will appear in the gazette. One more word ; as we mounted the steps to the commander-in-chief's private room, his lordship's well formed leg

reminded me of Cathline, as you justly said by this time, Charlie's mavournen, and I said, "my lord bishop, press the matter with energy, remember the Irish girl's ankles.

" 'Romilly,' said the kind hearted and benevolent man, 'I know you too well to mind your impudence.'

" Won't we have a day and a night to talk over the priest and the lady when Charlie the Cuirassier first mounts guard !

" Yours ever,

" ——— ROMILLY."

This letter, as well it might, caused me considerable amusement, as also considerable happiness, arising principally from the early promotion of my friend, as well as his removal

from what I considered as a position of some danger, I scarcely knew why, and then came further explanations.

“DEAR,

“I have been to the Castle. In the first place, let me endeavour to describe the place itself, as well as the scenery by which it is on all sides surrounded. Bold hills, thick and magnificent woodlands, and superb views. The Castle of itself, an ancient baronial residence, stands on a beautiful slope, backed by luxuriant woods and shrubs of evergreens, flourishing and blooming as heretofore I have never beheld. In the front, the fine terrace garden, kept in perfect order, extends almost to the margin of a lake which is supplied by a sparkling trout stream. Beyond the park,

which is well wooded, arises grouse hill on grouse hill, till lost in the blue distance. In fact, I have seldom witnessed such scenery in which I delight, and till now, scarcely believed Ould Ireland could produce. Now enter the Castle ; I will not say that it is furnished with that profuse gilding of modern elegance, which is the fashion of the day, but it has far greater charms with me. The old oak furniture, the library filled with books, in fact the large heavy oak doors, here and there lightened by the gilding picked out in their panels, has an apparent comfort and solidity, which pervades the whole household. And as regards the comfort, still more the elegance—for elegances were here and there dispersed, I must confess there was but one in that house, or establishment, who could have thought of them, for Irish establishments are not generally very particular as to refinement.

“ But I must be brief, for the day is brillian

and Cathline and I, now fast friends, are going to ride over the heather hills and far away. You will be astonished that I should thus familiarly name her, but the fact is, I have been here for more than a week. The Irish are frank and warm hearted, and we are left much to ourselves, when that confounded priest, whom I mistrust, and sometimes almost hate, does not intrude himself. I ride occasionally to look at my party, but Miss O'Gwynne generally rides with me, or meets me, and whenever such is the case he is sure to intrude. I ought rather to consider him my friend than otherwise, but the fact is very strange, although they are all catholics here, and here about, and notwithstanding *mon oncle* the bishop, for the sake of Cathline and her father, who is a well-bred gentleman, and a thorough sportsman, to say nothing of his kindness, and extreme hospitality,—as also many others whom I have met here— notwithstanding that the people are not to my

taste, for what with their brogue, which sets my teeth on edge, and their drinking whiskey punch as if it was water, and then making love to Miss O'Gwynne, I confess I should be almost tempted to become a catholic myself—for the little chapel in the Castle is very beautiful, and Father Clement in his robes is so unlike the ill-paid, red-nosed curates one sees in the parish churches in England, and the incense is so sweet, and there is altogether such a refinement and softness and soothing influence in their service, so utterly distinct from the dry oratory of a well paid preacher in England, that I am half converted. And then dear —, only fancy the beautiful form of Cathline kneeling on her velvet cushion, with her exquisite little head reposing on her beautiful little hands; and above all, the knowledge that you may commit all crimes from sheep stealing even unto running away with your entertainer's fair daughter, catholic though she be. And

such a fellow as Father Clement, if you will only get into his box, which he calls the confessional, will put his taper white hand on your well combed and well maccassared head, and say, 'If you will but tell the truth, go, and sin no more.' Vastly agreeable and accommodating, is it not? And mark you, you may sin on repeatedly, but you can always get absolution, if ready to pay; and like a bad boy, whose fond mother scolds, and then gives him a lollipop, the priest will say, 'Go and be a good boy till next time, then come to me with something in your breeches' pocket.' It is very funny, is it not? But the strangest part of it is this, that instead of trying to convert me—with the anticipation of a cardinal's hat—when he finds Cathline and I together, he invariably turns the conversation on the protestant religion, and though, apparently upholding the Pope, he has a sort of manner of convincing me, as he appears to be endeavouring to con-

vince Cathline, that the protestants are in the right, and no mistake. This, however, believe me, is only when he finds the sweet girl alone, or with me. At all other times, as in all other society, he is an unflinching, bigoted Roman Catholic of the highest order, and, I firmly believe, hates me, as he does all other protestants. Now, I can only tell you, that the more I see of Cathline the more I admire, nay, love her, and truly do I wish she was not one of them. Her father also—what a noble heart he has! what true hospitality! and how he loves the girl, his daughter, as well he may. I return to my solitary abode to-morrow, I have asked Father Clement if he will join me at dinner. I am desirous, if possible, to ascertain some particulars of the family.”

My limits do not permit of my dwelling longer on a tale, the details of which would form a tolerable volume in the hands of the novelist, therefore I shall proceed with all pos-

sible brevity. In due course, therefore, and in accordance with Romilly's letter, my friend Charlie was gazetted to the Life Guards. He then made known to me his deep attachment to Miss O'Gwynne, an attachment returned on her part. A short time only elapsed, and after a few years I had the happiness of witnessing their happiness completed by marriage, a marriage which his uncle approved of, and Romilly declared the bride was the fairest Emerald ever imported from Erin.

But how could a dignitary of the church rejoice in the marriage of his protestant nephew with a catholic? Why, simply that love did much, and good sense, and reason, did more; and instead of endeavouring to convert her husband to error, she renounced her own, and knelt in true faith, not to a wooden cross, but with a heart reposing entirely in the atoning blood of Him, by which only we can hope to be saved.

And what of Father Clement? He remained the handsome, agreeable priest, and he left the wilds of Connaught, where all his schemes had failed, for a field more suited to his genius.

I must, therefore, explain that the vast possessions of the O'Gwynne family were his real object, not the cure of souls. The father of Sir — O'Gwynne had left a will, which ran thus: 'That in case his granddaughter should marry or change her religion, without the consent of her father, on his death, the whole of his fortune should be left, with a very trifling allowance to Cathline, to the Jesuitical College of ———.' The knowledge of this fact was the cause of so agreeable a man as Father Clement being thus located, to hatch with tender care and anxious expectation, the consummation of such an event. On the arrival of Templar, he felt at once that the chances were in his favor. But there's many a slip between

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the cup and the lip. Miss O'Gwynne did renounce the Roman Catholic religion, and did marry, but neither without her father's consent.

THE END.

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